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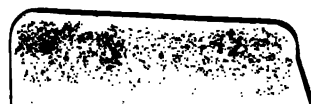
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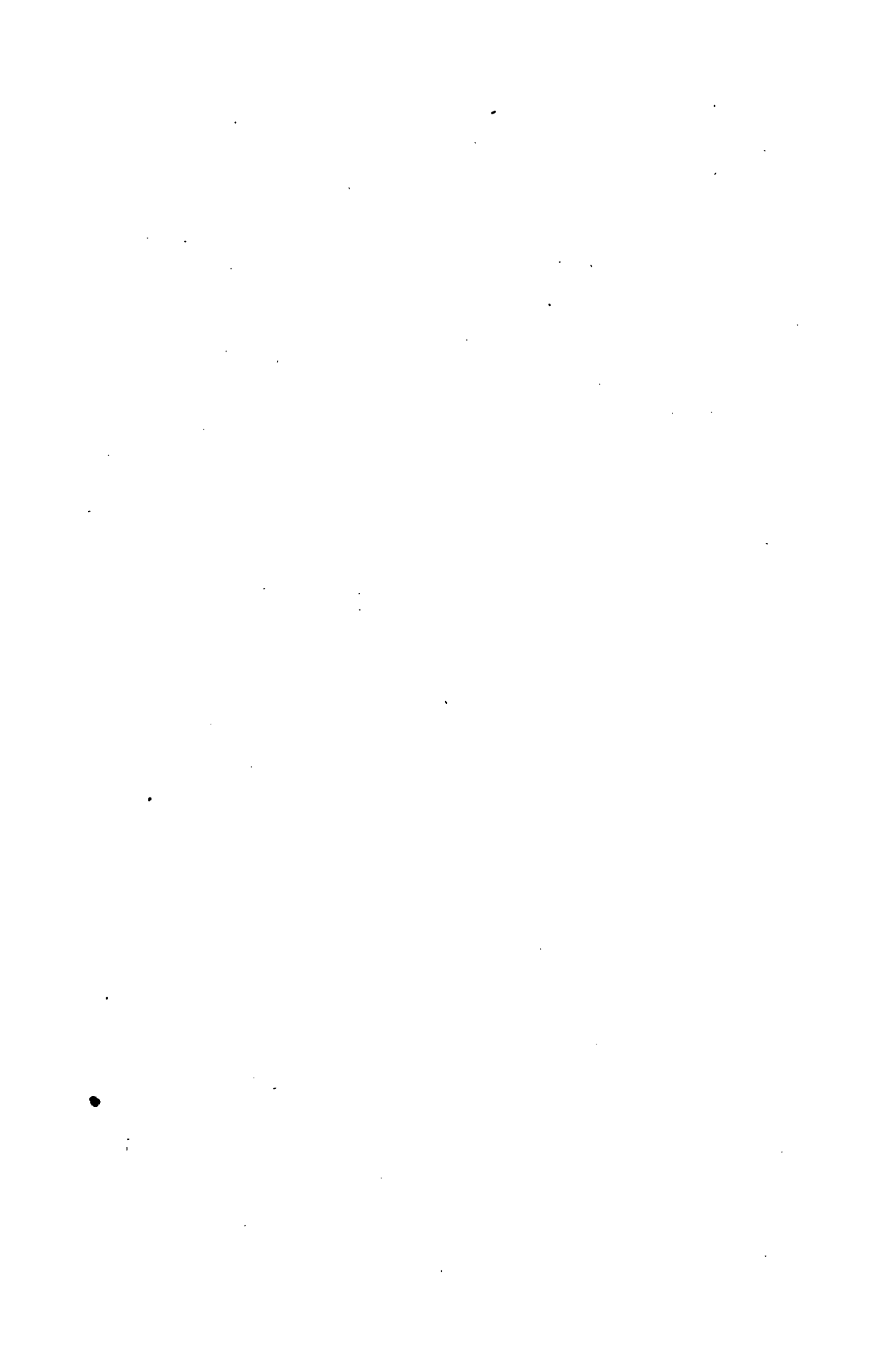
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OFFICIAL BULLETINS
OF THE
BATTLE OF WATERLOO.

49.560.





OFFICIAL BULLETINS

OF THE

BATTLE OF WATERLOO

IN THE

ORIGINAL LANGUAGES,



WITH

TRANSLATIONS INTO ENGLISH.

EDITED BY

JOHN PALFREY BURRELL,

OF GRAY'S INN, BARRISTER-AT-LAW.

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MDCCCXLIX.

INTRODUCTION.

My sole object in publishing the following bulletins is to preserve to future times the particulars of the great battle to which they relate, as given by the respective governments whose troops were engaged in it—a battle the most remarkable of modern times, whether we consider the greatness of the contending nations, the fame of the generals on both sides, or the importance of the results.

Besides giving the bulletins in their original languages, I have given translations of them into English, for the convenience of such of my countrymen as may not be conversant with the languages of the continent; and, for the accommodation of the continental nations, I have given a translation of the Duke of Wellington's bulletin into French.

There are two of the bulletins which I have not been able to procure in any other than the English language—that of Russia and that of Austria.

As I am not a military man, I have not permitted myself to make a single comment, though an attentive reader will, doubtless, find much to observe in them.

J. P. BURRELL.

Gray's Inn, March 12th, 1849.

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THE

WATERLOO DISPATCHES.

Downing-street, June 22.

Major the Honourable H. Percy arrived late last night with a dispatch from Field Marshal the Duke of Wellington, K.G., to Earl Bathurst, his Majesty's principal Secretary of State for the War Department, of which the following is a copy :—

Waterloo, June 19, 1815.

MY LORD,—Buonaparte having collected the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 6th corps of the French army and the Imperial Guards, and nearly all the cavalry on the Sambre, and between that river and the Meuse, between the 10th and 14th of the month, advanced on the 15th, and attacked the Prussian posts of Thuin and Lobez, on the Sambre, at daylight in the morning.

I did not hear of these events till the evening of the 15th, and I immediately ordered the troops to prepare to march ; and afterwards to march to their left, as soon as I had intelligence from other quarters to prove that the enemy's movement upon Charleroy was the real attack.

The enemy drove the Prussian posts from the Sambre on that day ; and General Zeiten, who commanded the corps which had been at Charleroy, retired upon Fleurus ; and Marshal Prince Blucher concentrated the Prussian army upon Sambref, holding the villages in front of his position of St. Amand and Ligny.

2 The enemy continued his march along the road from Charleroy towards Bruxelles, and on the same evening, the 15th, attacked a brigade of the army of the Netherlands, under the Prince de Weimar, posted at Frasné, and forced it back to the farm-house on the same road, called Les Quatre Bras.

The Prince of Orange immediately reinforced this brigade with another of the same division, under General Perpoucher, and in the morning early regained part of the ground which had been lost, so as to have the command of the communication leading from Nivelles and Bruxelles with Marshal Blucher's position.

In the meantime, I had directed the whole army to march upon Les Quatre Bras; and the 5th division, under Lieut. General Sir Thomas Picton, arrived at about half-past two in the day, followed by the corps of troops under the Duke of Brunswick, and afterwards by the contingent of Nassau.

At this time, the enemy commenced an attack upon Prince Blucher with his whole force, excepting the 1st and 2nd corps, and a corps of cavalry under General Kellerman, with which he attacked our post at Les Quatre Bras.

The Prussian army maintained their position with their usual gallantry and perseverance, against a great disparity of numbers, as the 4th corps of their army, under General Bulow, had not joined, and I was not able to assist them as I wished, as I was attacked myself, and the troops, the cavalry in particular, which had a long distance to march, had not arrived.

We maintained our position also, and completely defeated and repulsed all the enemy's attempts to get possession of it. The enemy repeatedly attacked us with a large body of infantry and cavalry, supported by a numerous and powerful artillery: he made several charges with the cavalry upon our infantry, but all were repulsed in the steadiest manner. In this affair, his Royal Highness the Prince of Orange, the Duke of Brunswick, and Lieut. Gen. Sir Thomas Picton, and Major Gen. Sir James Kempt, and Sir Denis Pack, who were engaged from the commencement of the enemy's attack, highly distinguished themselves, as well as Lieut. Gen. Charles Baron Alton, Major Gen. Sir C. Halket, Lieut. Gen. Cooke, and Major Generals Maitland and Byng, as they successively arrived. The troops of the 5th division, and those of the Brunswick corps, were long and severely engaged, and conducted themselves with the utmost gallantry. I must particularly mention the 28th, 42nd, 79th and 92nd regiments, and the battalion of Hanoverians.

Our loss was great, as your Lordship will perceive by the

inclosed return; and I have particularly to regret his Serene Highness the Duke of Brunswick, who fell fighting gallantly at the head of his troops.

Although Marshal Blucher had maintained his position at Sombref, he still found himself much weakened by the severity of the contest in which he had been engaged; and as the 4th corps had not arrived, he determined to fall back and concentrate his army upon Wavre; and he marched in the night after the action was over.

This movement of the Marshal's rendered necessary a corresponding one on my part; and I retired from the farm of Quatre Bras upon Genappe, and thence upon Waterloo the next morning, 17th, at ten o'clock.

The enemy made no effort to pursue Marshal Blucher. On the contrary, a patrol which I sent to Sombref in the morning, found all quiet, and the enemy's videttes fell back as the patrol advanced. Neither did he attempt to molest our march to the rear, although made in the middle of the day, excepting by following, with a large body of cavalry, brought from his right, the cavalry under the Earl of Uxbridge.

This gave Lord Uxbridge an opportunity of charging them with the 1st Life Guards, upon their debouche from the village of Genappe, upon which occasion his Lordship has declared himself to be well satisfied with that regiment.

The position which I took up in front of Waterloo, crossed the high roads from Charleroy and Nivelles, and had its right thrown back to a ravine near Merbe Braine, which was occupied, and its left extended to a height above the hamlet, Ter la Haye, which was likewise occupied. In front of the right centre, and near the Nivelles road, we occupied the house and garden of Hougomont, which covered the return of that flank; and in front of the left centre, we occupied the farm of La Haye Sainte. By our left we communicated with Marshal Prince Blucher at Wavre, through Ohaim; and the Marshal had promised me, that in case we should be attacked, he would support me with one or more corps, as might be necessary.

The enemy collected his army, with the exception of the 3rd corps, which had been sent to observe Marshal Blucher, on a range of heights in our front, in the course of the night of the

17th, and yesterday morning: and at about ten o'clock, he commenced a furious attack upon our post at Hougomont. I had occupied that post with a detachment from Gen. Byng's brigade of Guards, which was in position in its rear; and it was for some time under the command of Lieut. Col. Macdonel, and afterwards of Colonel Home; and I am happy to add, that it was maintained throughout the day with the utmost gallantry by these brave troops, notwithstanding the repeated efforts of large bodies of the enemy to obtain possession of it.

This attack upon the right of our centre was accompanied by a very heavy cannonade upon our whole line, which was destined to support the repeated attacks of cavalry and infantry, occasionally mixed, but sometimes separate, which were made upon it. In one of these, the enemy carried the farm-house of La Haye Sainte, as the detachment of the light battalion of the legion which occupied it had expended all its ammunition, and the enemy occupied the only communication there was with them.

The enemy repeatedly charged our infantry with his cavalry, but these attacks were uniformly unsuccessful, and they afforded opportunity to our cavalry to charge; in one of which, Lord E. Somerset's brigade, consisting of the Life Guards, Royal Horse Guards, and 1st Dragoon Guards, highly distinguished themselves, as did that of Major Gen. Sir Wm. Ponsonby, having taken many prisoners and an eagle.

These attacks were repeated till about seven in the evening, when the enemy made a desperate effort with the cavalry and infantry, supported by the fire of artillery, to force our left centre, near the farm of La Haye Sainte, which, after a severe contest, was defeated; and having observed that the troops retired from this attack in great confusion, and that the march of Gen. Bulow's corps, by Euchermon, upon Planchenorte and La Belle Alliance had begun to take effect, and as I could perceive the fire of his cannon, and as Marshal Prince Blücher had joined in person, with a corps of his army, to the left of our line, by Ohain, I determined to attack the enemy, and immediately advanced the whole line of infantry, supported by the cavalry and artillery. The attack succeeded in every point: the enemy was forced from his position on the heights, and fled in the utmost confusion, leaving behind him, as far

as I could judge, 150 pieces of cannon, with their ammunition, which fell into our hands. I continued the pursuit till long after dark, and then discontinued it only on account of the fatigue of our troops, who had been engaged during twelve hours, and because I found myself on the same road with Marshal Blücher, who assured me of his intention to follow the enemy throughout the night: he has sent me word this morning that he had taken sixty pieces of cannon belonging to the Imperial Guard, and several carriages, baggage, &c., belonging to Buonaparte, in Genappe.

I propose to move this morning, upon Nivelles, and not to discontinue my operations.

Your Lordship will observe that such a desperate action could not be fought, and such advantages could not be gained, without great loss; and I am sorry to add, that ours has been immense. In Lieut. Gen. Sir Thomas Picton, His Majesty has sustained the loss of an officer who has frequently distinguished himself in his service; and he fell, gloriously leading his division to a charge with bayonets, by which one of the most serious attacks made by the enemy on our position was defeated.

The Earl of Uxbridge, after having successfully got through this arduous day, received a wound by almost the last shot fired, which will, I am afraid, deprive His Majesty for some time of his services.

His Royal Highness the Prince of Orange distinguished himself by his gallantry and conduct till he received a wound from a musket ball through the shoulder, which obliged him to quit the field.

It gives me the greatest satisfaction to assure your Lordship, that the army never, upon any occasion, conducted itself better. The division of guards, under Lieut. Gen. Cooke, who is severely wounded, Major Gen. Maitland, and Major Gen. Byng, set an example which was followed by all; and there is no officer, nor description of troops, that did not behave well.

I must, however, particularly mention, for His Royal Highness's approbation, Lieut. Gen. Sir H. Clinton, Major Gen. Adam, Lieut. Gen. Chas. Baron Alton, severely wounded; Major Gen. Sir Colin Halket, severely wounded; Col. Ompteda, Col. Mitchell, commanding a brigade of the 4th division;

Major Gen. Sir Jas. Kemp, and Sir Denis Pack, Major Gen. Lambert, Major Gen. Lord E. Somerset, Major Gen. Sir W. Ponsonby, Major Gen. Sir C. Grant, and Major Gen. Sir H. Vivian, Major Gen. Sir O. Vandellour, Major Gen. Count Dornberg. I am also particularly indebted to Gen. Lord Hill, for his assistance and conduct upon this as upon all former occasions.

The Artillery and Engineer departments were conducted, much to my satisfaction, by Col. Sir Geo. Wood and Col. Smyth; and I have every reason to be satisfied with the conduct of the Adj. Gen. Major Gen. Barnes, who was wounded, and of the Quarter Master Gen. Delancy, who was killed by a cannon shot in the middle of the action. This officer is a serious loss to His Majesty's service, and to me at this moment. I was likewise much indebted to the assistance of Lieut. Col. Lord Fitzroy Somerset, who was severely wounded, and of the officers composing my personal staff, who have suffered severely in this action. Lieut. Col. the Hon. Sir Alexander Gordon, who has died of his wounds, was a most promising officer, and is a serious loss to His Majesty's service.

Gen. Kruse, of the Nassau service, likewise conducted himself much to my satisfaction; as did Gen. Trip, commanding the heavy brigade of cavalry; and Gen. Vanhope, commanding a brigade of infantry of the King of the Netherlands.

Gen. Pozzo di Borgo, Gen. Baron Vincent, Gen. Muffling, and Gen. Alava, were in the field during the action, and rendered me every assistance in their power. Baron Vincent is wounded, but I hope not severely; and Gen. Pozzo di Borgo received a contusion.

I should not do justice to my feelings or to Marshal Blucher and the Prussian army, if I did not attribute the successful result of this arduous day to the cordial and timely assistance I received from them.

The operation of Gen. Bulow upon the enemy's flank was a most decisive one; and even if I had not found myself in a situation to make the attack, which produced the final result, would have forced the enemy to retire, if his attacks should have failed; and would have prevented him from taking advantage of them, if they should unfortunately have succeeded.

I send, with this dispatch, two eagles, taken by the troops in this action, which Major Percy will have the honour of laying at the feet of His Royal Highness.

I beg leave to recommend him to your Lordship's protection.

I have the honour, &c.,

(Signed) WELLINGTON.

P.S. Since writing the above, I have received a report, that Major Gen. Sir W. Ponsonby is killed; and in announcing this intelligence to your Lordship, I have to add the expression of my grief, for the fate of an officer who had already rendered very brilliant and important services, and was an ornament to his profession.

2nd P. S. I have not yet got the returns of killed and wounded, but I enclose a list of officers killed and wounded on the two days, as far as the same can be made out without the returns; and I am very happy to add, that Col. Delancy is not dead, and that strong hopes of his recovery are entertained.

*Supplement to the Gazette of Madrid, of Tuesday, 13th July, 1815.
Continuation of the Official Article.*

The Lieutenant General of the King's armies, Don Miguel de Alava, Minister Plenipotentiary of His Majesty, in Holland, has addressed to His Eminence, Signor Don Pedro Cevallos, First Secretary of State and of Dispatches, the following letter:—

MOST EMINENT SIR,—The very short time which passed between the departure of the courier and the victory of the 18th, did not permit me to write to your Excellency so much at length as I could have desired, and although the army is upon the point of marching, and I am about to depart for the Hague, to deliver my credentials, which I did not receive till this very morning, I will, notwithstanding, give to your Eminence some details respecting that important success, which will probably bring us to a termination of the war much sooner than we could have hoped.

I wrote to your Eminence on the 16th, that Buonaparte, marching from Maubeuge and Philipville, had attacked the posts of the Prussians, on the Sambre, and driving them from Charleroi, had entered that town on the 15th.

On the 16th, the Duke of Wellington ordered his army to unite at a point called Quatre Bras, where the roads from Namur to Nivelles, and from Brussels to Charleroi, cross each other, and he himself arrived at that place about seven o'clock of the same morning.

On his arrival there, he found the Hereditary Prince of Orange, who, with a division of his corps, was keeping the enemy in check, and giving time to the rest of the army to unite.

Meanwhile, the English division of Gen. Picton arrived, with which Lord Wellington maintained an unequal combat against more than 30,000 of the enemy, without losing a single inch of ground. The English guards, various regiments of infantry, and the Scotch brigade covered themselves with glory on that day; and Lord Wellington told me, the following day, that he had never seen his troops behave better, during the many years that he had commanded them.

The French Cuirassiers suffered much on their part; for trusting to their cuirasses, they approached so near the English squares as to kill the leaders of the 42nd. These brave troops, however, without being appalled, kept up such a sustained fire, that the ground remained strewed with Cuirassiers and their horses.

In the meantime, the troops were arriving, and night put an end to the combat on that side.

During this time, Buonaparte, with the rest of his forces, was fighting against Marshal Blücher, with whom he was engaged in a very sanguinary combat until five in the evening; from which time, till nine o'clock, he was repulsed by the Prussians, with great loss on both sides. But at this moment he made a charge with his cavalry, so vigorous, that the Prussian line of infantry was broken, and thrown into confusion and disorder throughout.

Whether it was that Buonaparte did not perceive this circumstance, or that he had experienced too great a loss, or that,

which is more probable, Marshal Blücher had restored the battle, certain it is that he derived no advantage from it, and that he left him tranquil all the night of the 16th.

Lord Wellington, who had united for the morning of the 17th, his whole army in the position of Quatre Bras, was taking his measures for attacking the enemy, when he received advice from Marshal Blücher, of the events of the preceding day, and of the circumstance which had snatched the victory from his hands; adding that he had sustained so much loss, as to be obliged to retire to Wavre, on our left, where the corps of Bulow would join him, and that on the 19th, he would be ready to undertake whatever might be desired.

In consequence, the Duke determined immediately to retire, and executed his retreat in so masterly a manner, that the enemy dared not incommode him. He took up a position in Brain le Luc, before the great forest of Soignies, according to a previous determination, and fixed his head-quarters in Waterloo.

I joined the army on the morning of the 18th, though I had received no orders to that effect, because I believed that I should thus best serve His Majesty, and at the same time fulfil your Excellency's directions; and this determination has afforded me the satisfaction of having been present at the most important battle that has been fought for many centuries, in its consequences, its duration, and the talents of the chiefs on both sides; and because the peace of the world, and the future security of all Europe, may be said to have depended on its result.

The position occupied by His Lordship was very good, but towards the centre it had various weak points, which required good troops to guard them, and much science and skill on the part of the general in chief. These qualifications were, however, to be found in abundance in the British troops and their illustrious commander, and it may be asserted, without offence to any one, that to them both belongs the chief part or all the glory of this memorable day.

On the right of the position, and a little in advance, was a country house, the importance of which Lord Wellington quickly perceived; because without it, the position could not

be attacked on that side, and it might therefore be considered as its key.

The Duke confided this important point to three companies of the English guards, under the command of Lord Saltoun, and laboured during the night of the 17th in fortifying it as well as possible, lining its garden, and a wood which served as its park, with Nassau troops, as sharp shooters.

At half-past ten, a movement was observed on the enemy's line, and many officers were seen coming from and going to a particular point, where there was a very considerable corps of infantry, which we afterwards understood to be the Imperial Guard: here was Buonaparte in person, and from this point issued all the orders. In the meantime, the enemy's masses were forming, and everything announced the approaching combat, which began at half-past eleven, the enemy attacking with one of his corps, and with his usual shouts, the country house on the right.

The Nassau troops found it necessary to abandon their post; but the enemy met such resistance in the house, that though they surrounded it on three sides, and attacked it most desperately, they were compelled to desist from their enterprise, leaving a great number of killed and wounded on the spot. Lord Wellington sent fresh English troops, who recovered the wood and garden, and the combat ceased for the present on this side.

The enemy then opened a horrible fire of artillery from more than 200 pieces, under cover of which, Buonaparte made a general attack from the centre to the right, with infantry and cavalry in such numbers, that it required all the skill of his Lordship to post his troops, and all the good qualities of the latter to resist the attack.

Gen. Picton, who was with his division on the road from Brussels to Charleroi, advanced with the bayonet to receive them; but was unfortunately killed at the moment when the enemy, appalled by the attitude of this division, fired, and then fled.

The English Life Guards then charged with the greatest vigour, and the 49th and 105th French regiments lost their eagles in this charge, together with from 2000 to 3000

prisoners. A column of cavalry, at whose head were the Cuirassiers, advanced to charge the Life Guards, and thus save their infantry, but the guards received them with the greatest valour, and the most sanguinary cavalry fight perhaps ever witnessed, was the consequence.

The French Cuirassiers were completely beaten in spite of their cuirasses, by troops who had nothing of the sort, and lost one of their eagles in this conflict, which was taken by the heavy English cavalry, called the Royals.

At this time, news arrived that the Prussian corps of Bulow had reached St. Lambert, and that Prince Blücher with another, under the orders of General Thielman, was advancing with the utmost haste to take part in the battle, leaving at Wavre those other corps which had suffered in the battle of the 16th at Fleurus. The arrival of these troops was so much the more necessary, inasmuch as the enemy had more than triple our forces, and that our loss was horrible in so unequal a combat maintained from half-past eleven in the morning till five o'clock in the evening.

Buonaparte, who did not believe the Prussians to be so near, and who reckoned upon destroying Lord Wellington before their arrival, perceived that he had fruitlessly lost more than five hours, and that in the critical position in which he was then placed, there remained no other resource, but that of desperately attacking the weak part of the English position, and thus, if possible, beating the Duke before his right was turned and attacked by the Prussians.

Henceforward, therefore, the whole was a repetition of attacks by cavalry and infantry, supported by more than 300 pieces of artillery, which, unfortunately, made horrible ravages in our line, and killed and wounded officers, artillerymen, and horses, in the weakest part of the position.

The enemy, aware of this destruction, made a charge with the whole cavalry of his guard, which took some pieces of cannon which could not be withdrawn; but the Duke, who was at this point, charged them with three battalions of English, and three of Brunswickers, and compelled them in a moment to abandon the artillery, though we were unable to withdraw them for want of horses, nor did they dare to advance to recover them.

At last, about seven in the evening, Buonaparte made a last effort, and, putting himself at the head of his guards, attacked the above point of the English position with such vigour, that he drove back the Brunswickers who occupied part of it, and for a moment the victory was undecided, and even more than doubtful.

The Duke, who felt that the moment was most critical, spoke to the Brunswick troops with that ascendancy which every great man possesses, made them return to the charge, and putting himself at their head, again restored the combat, exposing himself to every kind of personal danger.

Fortunately, at this moment we perceived the fire of Marshal Blücher attacking the enemy's right with his usual impetuosity, and the moment of decisive attack being come, the Duke put himself at the head of the English Foot-guards, spoke a few words to them, which were replied to by a general hurrah, and his Grace himself guiding them on with his hat, they marched at the point of the bayonet, to come to close action with the Imperial Guard.

But this latter began a retreat, which soon became a complete flight, and the most total rout that had ever been beheld, whole columns throwing away their arms and cartouche boxes, the better to escape, and leaving the marks of the place in which they had formed, where alone we possessed ourselves of 150 pieces of cannon. The rout of Victoria was not comparable to it, and only resembles it in this, that on both occasions the enemy lost their whole train of artillery, baggage, and instruments of war.

The Duke continued the pursuit to near Genappe, where he found the venerable Blücher, and where they embraced each other in the most cordial manner, in the cross-road of Charleroi. And now finding himself at the same point with the Prussians, and as his army required repose after such a struggle, he left the care of the pursuit to Blücher, who promised that he would not leave the enemy a moment's repose. Thus he executed his plan, and yesterday had at midday reached Charleroi, which he intended to leave in the evening to follow up the pursuit. Such is the account of what passed on that memorable day, the consequences of which are too easily perceived to need to be

detailed. Buonaparte, shaken on his usurped throne, without money and without troops to recruit his army, has received so fatal a blow, that, according to what the prisoners say, he has no other resource left to him but to cut his throat. From this feeling, they say, he never exposed so much his person, and that he appeared to seek death, rather than survive a defeat, the consequences of which must be so fatal to him.

I have said in my letter of the 16th, that his manœuvres appeared to me rash before such generals as Blücher and the Duke. The event has fully justified my prediction, and I think that his execution of them could only have arisen from his despair at seeing such enormous forces assailing him on all sides of France, and with the design of striking one of his accustomed blows before the arrival of the Russians and Austrians.

His military reputation is lost for ever; since on this occasion he cannot lay the blame on the treachery of his allies, or the premature breaking down of bridges. The whole shame of the defeat must rest upon himself. Superiority of numbers and of artillery, everything was in his favour; and his having been the assailing party is a proof that he possessed sufficient means of executing his plans.

Finally, that talisman which, like a charm, held the French soldiery under enchantment, was upon this occasion broken, and Buonaparte has lost for ever the reputation of being invincible, which has passed over to a man who, for the future, far from employing that glorious reputation in disturbing and enslaving Europe, will convert it into a means of her felicity, and of procuring for her that peace, of which she is so much in need.

The loss of the English is tremendous, and of all those who were immediately about the Duke's person, himself and I alone were untouched in our persons and horses. All the rest were either killed or wounded, or lost one or more horses.

The Duke of Brunswick was killed on the 16th, and the Prince of Orange, and, lastly, the Prince of Nassau received musket balls. The Prince of Orange distinguished himself in the highest degree; but, unfortunately, though his wound is not dangerous, it will deprive the army of his important services for some time, and he may possibly lose the use of his left arm.

Lord Paget, general of the cavalry, received, at the end of the battle, a wound, which rendered the amputation of his right leg necessary—an irreparable loss, since it will be difficult to meet with an officer capable of conducting the cavalry with so much bravery and science as he did.

The Duke could not refrain from tears at the sight of so many honourable and brave men slain, and the loss of so many friends and faithful companions, and the greatness of the victory alone could alleviate so immense a loss.

This morning he set out for Nivelles, and to-morrow, he will set out for Mons, whence he will immediately enter France. The occasion cannot be more favourable. I cannot conclude this dispatch without mentioning to your Excellency, for the favourable notice of his Majesty, Captain D. Nicolas Minniser, of the regiment of sharpshooters of Doyle, of whom I have formerly spoken to your Excellency, as also of his future destination in that army. He conducted himself, on this last occasion, with the greatest valour and intrepidity, having been wounded, when the Nassau troops being driven out of the garden, he rallied them, and made them return to their post. He had, during the battle, another horse wounded; and his former conduct, as well as his conduct on that day, renders him worthy that his Majesty should confer on him some mark of his satisfaction. That officer is well known in the war office, and also to General D. J. de Zuys, who very highly appreciates his merit.

*Official Report of the Operations of the Prussian Army
of the Lower Rhine.*

It was on the 15th of this month, (June) that Napoleon, after having collected on the 14th, five corps of his army, and the several corps of the guard, between Maubeuge and Beaumont, commenced hostilities. The points of concentration of the four Prussian corps were Fleurus, Namur, Ancy, and Hannut, the situation of which made it possible to unite the army in one of these points in twenty-four hours.

On the 15th, Napoleon advanced by Thuin, upon the two banks of the Sambre, against Charleroi. Gen. Ziethen had

collected the first corps near Fleurus, and had on that day a very warm action with the enemy, who, after having taken Charleroi, directed his march upon Fleurus. General Ziethen maintained himself in his position near that place.

Field Marshal Blucher, intending to fight a great battle with the enemy as soon as possible, the three other corps of the Prussian army were consequently directed upon Sambref, a league and a half from Fleurus, where the 2nd and 3rd corps were to arrive on the 15th, and the 4th corps on the 16th.

Lord Wellington had united his army between Ath and Nivelles, which enabled him to assist Field Marshal Blucher, in case the battle should be fought on the 15th.

June 16th.—Battle of Ligny.

The Prussian army was posted on the heights between Brie and Sombref, and beyond the last place, and occupied with a large force the villages of St. Amand and Ligny, situated in its front. Meantime, only three corps of the army had joined; the fourth, which was stationed between Liege and Hannut, had been delayed in its march by several circumstances, and was not yet come up. Nevertheless, Field Marshal Blucher resolved to give battle, Lord Wellington having already put in motion, to support him, a strong division of his army, as well as his whole reserve stationed in the environs of Brussels, and the fourth corps of the Prussian army being also on the point of arriving.

The battle began at three o'clock in the afternoon. The enemy brought up above 130,000 men. The Prussian army was 80,000 strong. The village of St. Amand was the first point attacked by the enemy, who carried it after a vigorous resistance.

He then directed his efforts against Ligny; it is a large village, solidly built, situated on a rivulet of the same name. It was there that a contest began, which may be considered as one of the most obstinate recorded in history. Villages have often been taken and retaken; but here the combat continued for five hours in the villages themselves, and the movements forwards or backwards were confined to a very narrow space. On both sides, fresh troops continually came up. Each party had behind the part of the village which it occupied, great masses of infantry, which maintained the combat, and were continually renewed by

the reinforcements which they received from their rear, as well as from the heights on the right and left. About 200 cannon were directed from both sides against the village, which was on fire in several places at once. From time to time, the combat extended along the whole line, the enemy having also directed numerous troops against the third corps; however, the main contest was near Ligny. Things seemed to take a favourable turn for the Prussian troops, a part of the village having been retaken by a battalion commanded by the Field Marshal in person; in consequence of which advantage, we had regained a height, which had been abandoned after the loss of St. Amand. Nevertheless the battle continued about Ligny with the same fury.

The issue seemed to depend on the arrival of the English troops, or on that of the fourth corps of the Prussian army; in fact, the arrival of this last division would have afforded the Field Marshal the means of making immediately, with the right wing, an attack, from which great success might be expected; but news arrived that the English division destined to support us was violently attacked by a corps of the French army, and that it was with great difficulty it had maintained itself in its position at Quatre Bras.

The fourth corps of the army did not appear, so that we were forced to maintain, alone, the contest with an army greatly superior in numbers.

The evening was already much advanced, and the combat about Ligny continued with the same fury, and the same equality of success: we invoked, but in vain, the arrival of those succours which were so necessary; the danger became every hour more and more urgent; all the divisions were engaged, or had already been so, and there were not any corps at hand able to support them. Suddenly a division of the enemy's infantry, which, by favour of the night had made a circuit round the village without being observed, at the same time that some regiments of Cuirassiers had forced the passage on the other side, took in the rear the main body of our army, which was posted behind the houses. This surprise on the part of the enemy was decisive, especially at the moment when our cavalry, posted on a height behind the village, was repulsed

by the enemy's cavalry in repeated attacks. Our infantry posted behind Ligny, though forced to retreat, did not suffer itself to be discouraged, either by being surprised by the enemy in the darkness—a circumstance which exaggerates in the mind of man the danger to which he finds himself exposed—or by the idea of seeing itself surrounded on all sides.

Formed in masses, it coolly repulsed all the attacks of the cavalry, and retreated in good order upon the heights, where it continued its retrograde movement upon Tilly. In consequence of the sudden irruption of the enemy's cavalry, several of our cannons, in their precipitate retreat, had taken directions which led them to defiles, in which they necessarily fell into disorder; in this manner, fifteen pieces fell into the hands of the enemy.

At the distance of a quarter of a league from the field of battle, the army formed again. The enemy did not venture to pursue it. The village of Brie remained in our possession during the night, as well as Sombref, where Gen. Thieleman had fought with the third corps, and whence he, at daybreak, slowly began to retreat towards Gembloux, where the fourth corps, under Gen. Bulow, had at length arrived during the night. The first and second corps proceeded in the morning behind the defile of Mount St. Guibert. Our loss in killed and wounded was great; the enemy, however, took from us no prisoners, except a part of our wounded. The battle was lost, but not our honour. Our soldiers had fought with a bravery which equalled every expectation; their fortitude remained unshaken, because every one retained his confidence in his own strength. On this day Field Marshal Blucher had encountered the greatest dangers. A charge of cavalry led on by himself had failed. While that of the enemy was vigorously pursuing, a musket shot struck the Field Marshal's horse; the animal, far from being stopped in his career by this wound, began to gallop more furiously, till it dropped down dead. The Field Marshal, stunned by the violent fall, lay entangled under the horse. The enemy's Cuirassiers, following up their advantage, advanced; our last horsemen had already passed by the Field Marshal, an adjutant alone remained with him, and had just alighted, resolved to share his fate. The danger was great, but Heaven watched over us. The enemy,

pursuing their charge, passed rapidly by the Field Marshal without seeing him ; the next moment, a second charge of our cavalry having repulsed them, they again passed by him with the same precipitation, not perceiving him, any more than they had done the first time. Then, but not without difficulty, the Field Marshal was disengaged from under the dead horse, and he immediately mounted a dragoon horse.

On the 17th, in the evening, the Prussian army concentrated itself in the environs of Wavre. Napoleon put himself in motion against Lord Wellington upon the great road leading from Charleroi to Brussels. An English division maintained on the same day, near Quatre Bras, a very severe contest with the enemy. Lord Wellington had taken a position on the road to Brussels, having his right wing leaning upon Braine la Leud, the centre near Mount St. Jean, and the left wing against La Haye Sainte. Lord Wellington wrote to the Field Marshal that he was resolved to accept battle in this position, if the Field Marshal would support him with two corps of his army. The Field Marshal promised to come with his whole army ; he even proposed, in case Napoleon should not attack, that the Allies themselves, with their whole united force, should attack him the next day. This may serve to show how little the battle of the 16th had disorganized the Prussian army, or weakened its moral strength. Thus ended the day of the 17th.

Battle of the 18th.

At break of day, the Prussian army again began to move. The 4th and 2nd corps marched by St. Lambert, where they were to take a position, covered by the forest, near Friche-mont, to take the enemy in the rear, when the movement should appear favourable. The 1st corps was to operate by Ohain, on the right flank of the enemy. The 3rd corps was to follow slowly in order to afford succour in case of need. The battle began about ten o'clock in the morning.

The English army occupied the heights of Mont St. Jean ; that of the French was on the heights before Planchenoit : the former was about 80,000 strong ; the enemy had above 130,000. In a short time the battle became general along the whole line. It seems that Napoleon had the design to throw the left



wing upon the centre, and thus to effect the separation of the English army from the Prussian, which he believed to be retreating upon Maestricht. For this purpose he had placed the greatest part of his reserve in the centre, against his right wing, and upon this point he attacked with fury. The English army fought with a valour which it is impossible to surpass. The repeated charges of the Old Guard were baffled by the intrepidity of the Scotch regiments, and at every charge the French cavalry was overthrown by the English cavalry. But the superiority of the enemy in numbers was too great; Napoleon continually brought forward considerable masses, and with whatever firmness the English troops maintained themselves in their position, it was not possible but that such heroic exertions must have a limit. It was half-past four o'clock. The excessive difficulties of the passage by the defile of St. Lambert had considerably retarded the march of the Prussian columns, so that only two brigades of the 4th corps had arrived at the covered position which was assigned to them. The decisive moment was come; there was not an instant to be lost. The generals did not suffer it to escape. They resolved immediately to begin the attack with the troops which they had at hand. Gen. Bulow, therefore, with two brigades and a corps of cavalry, advanced rapidly upon the rear of the enemy's right wing.

The enemy did not lose his presence of mind; he instantly turned his reserve against us, and a murderous conflict began on that side.

The combat remained long uncertain, while the battle with the English army still continued with the same violence.

Towards six o'clock in the evening, we received the news that Gen. Thieleman, with the 3rd corps, was attacked near Wavre by a very considerable corps of the enemy, and that they were already disputing the possession of the town. The Field Marshal, however, did not suffer himself to be disturbed by this news; it was on the spot where he was, and nowhere else, that the affair was to be decided. A conflict continually supported by the same obstinacy, and kept up by fresh troops, could alone insure the victory, and if it were obtained here, any reverse sustained near Wavre was of little consequence. The

columns, therefore, continued their movements. It was half an hour past seven, and the issue of the battle was still uncertain. The whole of the 4th corps, and part of the 2nd, under Gen. Pirch had successively come up. The French troops fought with desperate fury: however, some uncertainty was perceived in their movements, and it was observed that some pieces of cannon were retreating. At this moment the first columns of the corps of Gen. Ziethen arrived on the points of attack near the village of Smonhen, on the enemy's right flank, and instantly charged. This moment decided the defeat of the enemy. His right wing was broken in three places; he abandoned his position. Our troops rushed forward at the *pas de charge*, and attacked him on all sides, while at the same time the whole English line advanced.

Circumstances were extremely favourable to the attack formed by the Prussian army: the ground rose in an amphitheatre, so that our artillery could freely open its fire from the summits of a great many heights which rose gradually above each other, and in the intervals of which, the troops descended into the plain, formed into brigades, and in the greatest order; while fresh troops continually unfolded themselves, issuing from the forest on the height behind us.

The enemy, however, still preserved means to retreat, till the village of Planchenoit, which he had on his rear, and which was defended by the guard, was, after several bloody attacks, carried by storm.

From that time the retreat became a rout, which soon spread through the whole French army, which, in its dreadful confusion, hurrying away everything that attempted to stop it, soon assumed the appearance of the flight of an army of barbarians. It was half-past nine. The Field Marshal assembled all the superior officers, and gave orders to send the last horse and the last man in pursuit of the enemy. The van of the army accelerated its march. The French army being pursued without intermission, was absolutely disorganised. The causeway presented the appearance of an immense shipwreck: it was covered with an innumerable quantity of cannon, caissons, carriages, baggage, arms, and wrecks of every kind. Those of the enemy who had attempted to repose for a time, and had

not expected to be so quickly pursued, were driven from more than nine bivouacs.

In some villages they attempted to maintain themselves; but as soon as they heard the beating of our drums, or the sound of the trumpet, they either fled or threw themselves into the houses, where they were cut down or made prisoners. It was moonlight, which greatly favoured the pursuit, for the whole march was but a continued chase, either in the corn-fields, or the houses.

At Genappe, the enemy had entrenched himself with cannon and overturned carriages; at our approach we suddenly heard in the town a great noise and a motion of carriages; at the entrance we were exposed to a brisk fire of musketry; we replied by some cannon shot, followed by an hurrah, and an instant after, the town was ours. It was here, that among many other equipages, the carriage of Napoleon was taken; he had just left it to mount on horseback, and in his hurry had forgotten, in it, his sword and hat. Thus the affair continued till break of day.

About 40,000 men, in the most complete disorder, the remains of the whole army, have saved themselves, retreating through Charleroi, partly without arms, and carrying with them only twenty-seven pieces of their numerous artillery.

The enemy, in his flight, has passed all his fortresses, the only defence of his frontiers, which are now left behind by our armies.

At three o'clock, Napoleon had dispatched from the field of battle, a courier to Paris, with the news that victory was no longer doubtful; a few hours after, he had no longer any army left. We have not yet any exact account of the enemy's loss; it is enough to know that two-thirds of the whole army are killed, wounded, or prisoners; among the latter are Gens. Menton, Duhesme, and Compans.

Up to this time, about 300 cannon, and above 500 caissons are in our hands.

Few victories have been so complete; and there is certainly no example that an army, two days after losing a battle, engaged in such an action, and so gloriously maintained it. Honour be to troops capable of so much firmness and valour!

In the middle of the position occupied by the French army, and exactly upon the height, is a farm, called La Belle Alliance. The march of all the Prussian columns was directed towards this farm, which was visible from every side. It was there that Napoleon was during the battle; it was thence that he gave his orders; that he flattered himself with the hopes of victory; and it was there that his ruin was decided. There, too, it was, that by a happy chance, Field Marshal Blucher and Lord Wellington met in the dark, and mutually saluted each other as victors.

In commemoration of the alliance which now subsists between the English and Prussian nations, of the union of the two armies, and their reciprocal confidence, the Field Marshal desired that this battle should bear the name of La Belle Alliance.

By the order of Field Marshal Prince Blucher,
(Signed) GENERAL GNEISENAU.

Extract from a Dispatch of Lieut. Gen. Charles of Alten, to his Royal Highness Field Marshal and Governor General the Duke of Cambridge, dated Brussels, the 20th June, 1815, and brought over by Lieut. and Upper Adjutant Wiegman.

On the evening of the 15th June, the troops broke up from their variously dispersed cantonments. The Duke of Wellington united them with the troops in the neighbourhood of Brussels, near Genappe. The Hereditary Prince of Orange, under whose orders my division was, retreated to Quatre Bras, where the roads from Mons to Namur, and from Brussels to Charleroi, cross each other. The French had divided their army, and attacked the Prussians, the Duke of Wellington, and our corps at the same time. The Hereditary Prince placed us between Quatre Bras and Sarte à Mavelines, with our right wing and our left on the latter village. The troops marched here under a most violent cannonade from the enemy. A wood on the right of Quatre Bras was alternately taken and retaken. The cannonade on both sides was very brisk. The enemy

endeavoured several times to force our left. I sent off the field-battalion Lüneburg to drive him from the village of Pierre-mont in front. The First Lieutenant Von Klenke executed this duty with great courage, took the village, and maintained it against repeated attacks of the enemy. The enemy's infantry now advanced in columns, against which I detached the battalions, Grupenhagen, Osnabruck, and Bremen. These troops, with the help of the artillery of the Royal German Legion, under Captain Eleves, repulsed the enemy. On the right wing, the enemy's cavalry several times ventured to attack; but the firmness of the troops prevented their being broken. Upon this occasion, the Landwehr battalion Lüneburg particularly distinguished itself under the command of Lieut Col. Ramdohr. These troops allowed the enemy's cavalry to come within thirty paces of them, and then gave a discharge, by which they were driven back with great loss. We were so fortunate as to maintain our position. However, as the Prussian army on our left had received a considerable check, we were obliged to retreat, on the 17th, to Genappe, my division forming the rear-guard. But as the enemy, in the afternoon, appeared there in great force, we marched back on Mont St. Jean, by the road to Brussels. Here the whole army of the Duke of Wellington had assembled, and taken a position on the height before that village, so that the left wing rested on the village of Frichemont, and the right on the road from Brussels to Nivelles. The road from Genappe to Brussels passed through the centre of the army which my division completed. The farm of La Haye Sainte, lying close to the left wing of my division, was occupied by the light battalion of the Royal German Legion, under Major Baring. In the farm-yard of Hougemont, lying before the right wing, and in the small wood in front, were placed a company of Hanoverian Jagers, and two light companies of English Guards.

The infantry of the Army Corps of his Royal Highness the Prince of Orange, to which my division belonged, was so placed, that the battalion might form into squares, or deploy into line, as circumstances might require, and sufficient space was left between them for the manœuvres of the cavalry and artillery posted in the rear. The corps of Gen. Lord Hill was

placed in reserve by Braine la Leud, and covered at the same time the road from Nivelles to Brussels. On the other side of the road were placed some cavalry to watch the movements of the enemy.

At one o'clock, the enemy's riflemen attacked the wood in front of our right, and a severe contest ensued. This position was of great importance; and could the enemy have carried it, and gained possession of the heights, our right flank would have been endangered. Strong columns of infantry, supported by artillery, advanced upon this position, which was bravely defended by the British Guards.

The battle at length became general through the whole line. A numerous artillery was directed upon us, under cover of which, an immense column of infantry advanced upon the road of Genappe, but it was repulsed by the 2nd light battalion, the 8th battalion of the line of the German legion, and the battalion of Lüneberg. The French cavalry next advanced with such impetuosity, as to drive in our light troops, and penetrate to the brow of the hill among the squares standing in echelon. This ground they maintained, notwithstanding every opposition, till the British cavalry came up, and completely repulsed them.

The fire of artillery now became more tremendous, and was continued with a violence which the oldest soldiers never before witnessed. The attacks of the French infantry and cavalry were incessant, and directed on various points. Buonaparte was resolved to pierce the centre, and open for himself a way to Brussels. One column was repulsed by Col. Ompteda, at the head of his battalion. The enemy, every moment, advanced nearer to us, and continually brought up fresh troops. His artillery played on our squares at the distance of 150 paces; with canister shot; not a single battalion yielded; the dead were thrust aside, and the ranks immediately closed. Some of the regiments rushing on the enemy, repulsed him in disorder.

At length, weakened by so many repeated and murderous attacks, and several of the battalions being nearly cut to pieces, my division was compelled to fall back, but it retired in good order, and cheerfully advanced again at the command of the Duke of Wellington, who was throughout an eye-witness of our conduct. This hero was uniformly found where the danger

was most imminent, and the Prince of Orange displayed a valour worthy of his noble ancestors; it was against his division that the principal efforts of the main body of the army, led on by Buonaparte in person, were directed.

At this critical moment, the Prussian General Von Bulow hastened to our support with 30,000 men, and attacked the enemy in his flank. The day was soon our own. The enemy fled in every direction, and abandoned the greater part of his artillery. Two hundred pieces of cannon and several eagles were taken, and although the number of prisoners cannot yet be accurately stated, it amounts to several thousands. Our army has advanced to Binsek, and that of the Prussians to Charleroi. The glory of these two days has been purchased with the loss of the greater part of our most distinguished officers.

Here follows the mention of many officers and corps that distinguished themselves.

*First Report of His Royal Highness the Prince of Orange
to His Majesty the King.*

Head quarters at Nivelles, the 17th June, 1815,
at 2 o'clock in the morning.

Very early on the morning of the 15th, the Prussian army was attacked in its position, which it quitted in consequence thereof, and retired from Charleroi by Goselies to the neighbourhood of Fleurus. As soon as I was apprized of this attack, I gave orders for the necessary dispositions of the *corps d'armée* under my command. In consequence of what had occurred with the Prussian army, the battalion of Orange Nassau, which held the village of Frasnes with a battery of mounted artillery, was already attacked on the 15th, at five in the afternoon. These troops remained in possession of their position on the heights of the above-mentioned village not far from the cross road named Les Quatre Bras. At eight o'clock the skirmishing at this point was at an end.

As soon as I was informed of this attack I issued orders to the third division, as also to the cavalry and two English divi-

sions to march to Nivelles, and directed the second division to maintain the position of Les Quatres Bras. Only a part of the second division could immediately proceed thither, as the brigade under the orders of Major General Van Byland could not march from Nivelles until the arrival of the other divisions at Nivelles might be expected.

So early as about five o'clock yesterday morning, the fire of the skirmishers commenced at the above-mentioned point, and was kept up till noon without any advantage on either side. Towards two o'clock, the attack, especially on the part of the cavalry and artillery, became much more violent. As the brigade of light cavalry under the command of Major General Van Merle was not able to come up until about four o'clock, I had till then no cavalry to oppose to the enemy. Being sensible of the great importance of maintaining the position on the heights in advance of the intersection of the road at the point called Les Quatres Bras, I had then the good fortune to hold this position against an enemy in all respects, and beyond all comparison, superior in force, since I was attacked by the two *corps d'armée* commanded by Generals D'Erlon and Reille; and as they were not able to succeed in this attack, the Duke of Wellington had time enough to assemble a force to frustrate the designs of the enemy.

The result of this attack was, that after a very severe engagement, which lasted till nine o'clock at night, we not only brought the enemy to a stand, but even drove him back to some extent. The Prussian army having been also attacked yesterday, maintained its main position; and it is beyond doubt that Napoleon directed the attack with a powerful force upon the whole line. Our troops have remained bivouacked on the field of battle, whither I am about to proceed forthwith, as it is highly probable that Napoleon will again endeavour to carry into execution his plans of yesterday. The Duke of Wellington has caused all the troops that could possibly do so, to assemble at this point. It affords me the highest satisfaction to be able to assure your Majesty that your Majesty's troops fought with much bravery, especially the infantry and artillery.

As through circumstances I have not yet been able to receive

the reports of the various corps in reference to their loss, it is impossible for me to forward to your Majesty the statement thereof herewith, but which I shall have the honour to do as soon as possible.

WILLIAM, PRINCE OF ORANGE.

*Second Report of His Royal Highness the Prince of Orange
to His Majesty the King.*

Brussels, 22nd June, 1815.

After the battle of the 16th, of which I had the honour to make a report to your Majesty at two o'clock on the morning of the 17th, from head-quarters at Nivelles, the Duke of Wellington, in order to remain in line with the Prussian army, made a movement the same morning, in consequence of which the army was in position, at seven o'clock in the evening, on the heights before Waterloo, and there bivouacked during the night.

The enemy's cavalry following up the movements of the army, were several times driven back, with great loss, by that of the British.

Early in the morning of the 18th, the enemy was discovered opposite to us, and at about ten o'clock, his dispositions of attack commenced.

The army of Buonaparte was composed of the 1st, 2nd, 4th, and 6th corps, the Imperial Guard, nearly the whole of the cavalry, and many hundred pieces of artillery.

At about eleven o'clock, the enemy opened a battery of a few cannon, and under its fire his skirmishers approached our right flank, and shortly afterwards he directed his attack against a farm situated on this flank, close before our line to the left of the road to Nivelles, surrounded by a shrubbery. The enemy made a most violent attack in order to obtain possession of this farm, but his efforts were fruitless. About noon, the cannonade was brisk, and before half-past twelve, the engagement was general throughout the whole line. The enemy attacked both flanks several times; and as it was his principal object to break through on the right of the centre, he made every exertion to succeed in this attempt. The columns of the enemy's cavalry were led on with much bravery, but notwithstanding that they

repeated their attacks again and again, with the most obstinate fury, from half-past three o'clock till the termination of the battle, yet they could not compel our line to give way; the enemy was in every instance repulsed as well by the fire of the squares as by the charges of the cavalry.

It is impossible to describe to your Majesty the animosity with which the troops fought, especially during the last six hours.

I had not the good fortune to be present at the conclusion of this glorious and important battle, having, half-an-hour before the defeat of the enemy, received a shot through the left shoulder, by which I was compelled to leave the field.

It gives me unspeakable pleasure to be able to state to your Majesty that your Majesty's troops of all arms fought with great bravery: in the charges of cavalry the brigade of Carbineers particularly distinguished itself.

The division of Lieutenant-General Chassé came late into the action, and as I could not personally absent myself from the centre, I placed him for that day under the orders of Lord Hill, who was in command of the second *corps d'armée*; and I received a report that this division also fought with great bravery, and that Lieutenant-General Chassé, as well as the two commanders of the brigades, have very well acquitted themselves of their duty.

I am not yet enabled to state to your Majesty the loss we have sustained, as I am waiting for the reports in reference thereto; I am nevertheless pained to be obliged to say that it is very considerable. The generals of the divisions are charged to make a report to me of those who have particularly distinguished themselves; and I must confine myself to naming to your Majesty those who have done so under my own eyes—namely, the Lieutenant-Generals Colldert and De Perponcher, the former of whom is wounded; Major-General Van Merle, a brave and experienced officer, died of his wounds on the field. I improve this occasion to commend his widow and children to your Majesty's kind consideration.

Major-General Trip distinguished himself particularly by his skill as well as bravery.

Major-General Ghigny.

The commanders of the three regiments of Carbineers—namely, Lieutenant-Colonel Coenegracht, who has died of his wounds; Colonel De Bruin and Lieutenant-Colonel Lechleitner wounded.

Lieutenant-Colonel Westenberg, of the 5th battalion of the National Militia, is a very meritorious officer, and led on with great skill his battalion, which behaved with the utmost bravery and gallantry in the affair of the 16th.

Major Hegman, of the 3rd Nassau Battalion, wounded.

Majors Mercx and Bryas, of the 2nd regiment of Carbineers, the latter wounded.

The Major of Artillery, De la Sarraz.

The Quartermaster-General, Major-General De Constant Rebecque, has performed his duty in a very satisfactory manner, and was of great service to me.

In conclusion, I consider it my duty to testify to your Majesty my satisfaction with the conduct of all my adjutants. Major Van Limburg Stirum was wounded already in the action of the 16th; and on the 18th, Colonel Du Caylar had one horse killed under him, Lieutenant-Colonel De Cruquembourg two, and Major Ampt one. My Adjutant, Major Van Hoof, is charged by me to deliver this report, and I take the liberty of recommending him to your Majesty's favour.

WILLIAM, PRINCE OF ORANGE.

Austrian Account.

Head-quarters of the Allied Sovereigns,
Heidelberg, June 21, 1815.

General Baron Vincent having been disabled from writing, in consequence of the wound he received in the battle of Waterloo, the Austrian Government gave publicity to the following account of the military events on the 15th, 16th, 17th, and 18th of June, in the Netherlands, and of the great victory obtained over Buonaparte and the French army, by the Duke of Wellington and Prince Blucher.

On the 12th of June, in the morning, at three o'clock, Napoleon Buonaparte left Paris, and, taking the road by Soissons, Laon, and Avesnes, arrived at Maubeuge on the 13th, in the

evening. Soult, as Major, went before him on the 9th, by the way of Lisle, as also Jerome Buonaparte, Marshal Mortier, and the guards. All the disposable troops, between the North Sea and the Maese, were collected in five corps d'armée, between the Sambre and the Meuse; 150,000 men, of whom 25,000 were cavalry, with sixty batteries of cannon, were destined to a grand attack, which was to force Marshal Blucher over the Meuse, and the Duke of Wellington towards Flanders. Even the corps of General Girard, which was stationed about Metz, was made to approach by way of Sedan, in order, in case of need, to serve as a reserve.

It was evidently the internal situation of France that induced Buonaparte to the hazardous step of staking the very flower of his strength against two generals who were fully equal to him. In the first place, it was only on the field of battle that he could become again perfect master of the army, whose creature he was become, and which combined in itself many discordant elements; in the second place, the first, as unimportant, as tumultuous sittings of the new representatives of France, which are before the public in the journals, showed the internal contradiction and the danger of his position so very clearly, that he could no longer hesitate to remove his throne from the capital to the camp.

Thus it happened, that he opened the campaign just at the moment when the Russian troops had entered into the line of the great force collected upon the Rhine, and when, therefore, no connected system of resistance was possible, except from the centre of France, and when the most fortunate result of his attacks could have no other effect than that of removing him still farther from the solution of the problem which was, in fact, before him.

According to accounts just received from the Netherlands, hostilities began there on the 15th instant. The enemy, who had in the last few days collected all his forces between the Sambre and the Meuse, and had assembled five corps d'armée, put his columns in motion on the 15th upon both banks of the Sambre, hoping to surprise the Prussian army in its cantonments, and by a rapid advance, perhaps, to hinder the different corps from concentrating themselves, and also to prevent the

union of the Prussian army under Prince Blucher, with that under the Duke of Wellington. As the two armies were cantoned with all their troops at the extreme frontiers of the enemy, their union was not practicable in any point except in the neighbourhood of Brussels.

To keep in view this main object—namely, mutual union, and to direct their operations accordingly, was the determination of the two illustrious commanders; and it was happily attained on the 17th, amidst continual and very bloody battles, by the valour of their troops, and by fresh proofs of their talents. The following, according to the statements of the couriers, who have just arrived, is a summary of these events:—

On the 15th, at half-past five in the morning, the posts of the Prussian first corps, under Gen. Von Ziethen, upon both sides of the Sambre, were attacked, and the points of Thuin and Charleroi were taken after an obstinate resistance from the troops which were stationed there. This general, according to his instructions, retreated fighting, and took a position at Fleurus. Field Marshal Prince Blucher, who had his head-quarters at Namur, assembled at Sombref, the second corps which was lying in the neighbourhood. The Duke of Wellington assembled his troops about Soignes and Braine le Comté. The enemy pushed his posts, this day, to Genappe, in order to interrupt the communications between the two armies. This induced the Duke of Wellington to place his reserve, on the morning of the 16th, at Quatre Bras, in order to approach on his side the Prussian army, and, by thus forcing the enemy to employ a part of his force against the English army, to afford all the aid he could to Prince Blucher. The three corps of the Prussian army collected, on the forenoon of the 16th, had the following position: on the right wing, the village of Brie; before the front, St. Amand; on the left wing, the village of Ligny; the third corps at Point du Jour.

On the 16th, in the forenoon, he advanced his columns beyond Charleroi, and soon commenced an attack upon Prince Blucher, against whom he directed his chief force. His strength was estimated at 120,000 foot, and 22,000 cavalry. It consisted of the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th corps of the French army, the Guards and the reserves.

The 4th Prussian corps, which was cantoned in the neighbourhood of Liege, had found it impossible to join the others. The Prussian army was, therefore, far inferior in strength to the enemy. However, it was a considerable mass, and all depended on maintaining the ground with this, in order to give the more remote corps, as well of the Duke of Wellington as of the Prussian army, time to come up. Prince Blucher, intimately persuaded how important this was, resolved to accept battle, notwithstanding the superiority of the enemy. About three o'clock in the afternoon, large masses of the enemy attacked the village of St. Amand. After a resistance, which cost the enemy very dear, it was taken, recovered again by the Prussian troops, again taken by the enemy; stormed, for the third time, by the Prussians, and, at last, each party remained in possession of one half of it, so that the part called Little St. Amand and La Haye remained in the occupation of the Prussian army. It was now five o'clock. The enemy directed his attacks against the village of Ligny, when a combat began that was still more murderous than the former. The village lies on the rivulet Ligny; the enemy had his artillery upon the heights on the further bank; that of the Prussians was planted on the heights of the hither bank. Amidst alternate attempts to take it from each other, one of the most bloody conflicts recorded in history continued here for four hours. Prince Blucher in person, sword in hand, continually led his troops again to the combat. The battle was at last undecided; the village remained here, also, half in the possession of each party. Thus the day declined; it was between eight and nine in the evening, when the enemy brought forward his masses of cavalry to attain his object—namely, to cut off the communication of the Prussians with the English army. This induced Field Marshal Blucher to withdraw his army by way of Tilly to Wavre, in order to join the fourth corps of the Prussian army, and to form an immediate junction with the Duke of Wellington.

The English army had been engaged on this day with Marshal Ney, and the French cavalry, under Gen. Kellerman; and on that side also the battle had been extremely bloody. The Duke of Wellington had been able to bring up only a part of his troops. However, the enemy had gained no ground, and at

nine o'clock in the morning of the 17th, the Duke was still on the field of battle, and regulated his movement to join with the Prussian army, in such a manner that his army was, on the 18th, at Waterloo.

The momentary interruption of the communication between the two allied armies, was the cause that the movement of the Prussian army upon Wavre was not known to the Duke till the 17th, in the morning. By this battle of Blucher's, the Duke of Wellington had gained time to collect his army; and on the 17th, in the forenoon, it stood at Les Quatre Bras. At ten o'clock he put it in motion, and made it take up a position with the right wing upon Braine la Leud, and the left upon La Haye. The enemy, on his side, followed the same evening with large masses, to within a cannon shot of the camp. In this position, the Duke was induced not to decline the battle, if Prince Blucher would approach nearer to him. Prince Blucher accepted the proposal, in case the enemy, as it was to be expected, should fall with all his force on the Duke of Wellington. He resolved, in this case, to march his army, by the way of St. Lambert, into the enemy's flank and rear. Early in the morning of the 18th, the fourth corps marched for this purpose through Wavre. It arrived at half-past eleven at St. Lambert, and was followed by the second, and then by the first corps.

As the third corps was on the point of following, it was attacked close to Wavre by a corps of the enemy which Buonaparte had detached thither to observe the Prussian army. Prince Blucher left General Thielemann, with the third corps, to oppose it, and keeping his mind constantly fixed on the grand object, turned all the rest against the mass of the enemy.

Towards eleven o'clock, the enemy developed from La Belle Alliance his attacks upon Mount St. Jean (Hougoumont is probably meant), which was the most important point of Wellington's position, and was occupied by 1000 infantry. A massy wall was raised there as a defence, and two successive violent attacks of the enemy, each with six battalions of infantry, were repulsed. Now Buonaparte advanced his cavalry, and undertook a general attack on the Duke's whole line. This also was repulsed. But the smoke of the cannon and musketry was, for a long time, prevented from rising by a heavy, tem-

pestuous air, and concealed the approach of the columns of infantry, which were all directed against the centre. Fresh attacks of cavalry were designed to employ the English infantry till the French came up, and no infantry less practised and less cool than the English could have resisted such attacks.

The first French attack of this description was repulsed about two o'clock; but Buonaparte renewed it five or six times, till about seven o'clock, with equal courage. The English cavalry of the King's household troops, led on by Lord Uxbridge, made, about six o'clock, some very brilliant attacks, and cut to pieces two battalions of the Old Guard, into whose masses they penetrated.

About this time, the extraordinary loss of men, and the necessity of bringing the reserves into the line, made the situation of the Duke of Wellington critical. Prince Blucher, however, had advanced with the fourth corps over Lasne and Aguiers, and about five o'clock his first cannon shot was fired from the heights of Aguiers. He extended his left wing towards the Cheysée of Genappe, in order to make his movement quite decisive. Buonaparte, upon this, threw some masses of his infantry upon La Haye, Pappleotte, and Frichefont, of which he made himself master; by which the armies of Blucher and Wellington were separated.

Prince Blucher had, however, at an earlier period, directed the first corps from St. Lambert over Ohain, to strengthen the Duke's left wing, and the head of this corps reached La Haye about seven o'clock, took this village without much resistance, advanced in masses, and restored the communication with the fourth corps; upon which it advanced along with it against La Belle Alliance, in order to disengage the Duke of Wellington, who was still occupied by a heavy fire of musketry along his whole line, and had been obliged to withdraw his artillery into the second position. When the enemy saw himself taken in the rear, a flight commenced, which soon became a total route, when the two allied armies charged the enemy on all sides. Field Marshal Blucher, who was the nearest to Genappe, undertook the pursuit of the enemy, as the two commanders met at La Belle Alliance about nine in the evening.

About eleven at night, Prince Blucher reached Genappe: the

enemy made a fruitless attempt to maintain himself there; he was instantly overthrown. Prince Blucher made his army march the whole night, in order incessantly to break all the enemy's masses that were still together. When the courier came away on the 19th, 300 cannon and powder wagons were already taken, as well as Buonaparte's field equipage.

Thus, by the aid of Providence, by the unanimity and bravery of the two allied armies, and by the talents of their generals, was obtained one of the greatest and most decisive victories recorded in history.

The loss of the allies on these bloody days of the 15th, 16th, 17th, and 18th of June may amount to 30,000 men killed and wounded. Among the superior officers of the English army killed, were the Duke of Brunswick Oels, Generals Picton, Ponsonby, and Fuller, the Duke's Aides-de-camp; the Colonels Gordon and Canning; wounded, the Quartermaster-General of the army, Delancy, General Sir — Barnes, the Prince Royal of the Netherlands, Lord Fitzroy Somerset, the Hereditary Prince of Nassau Weilburg (slightly); and of the Duke of Wellington's suite, the Austrian General, Baron Vincent, the Russian General, Count Pozzo di Borgo, and almost all the Duke's aides-de-camp.

The loss of the Prussian army on the 18th is not mentioned, no reports having been made. On the 15th and 16th there were, among the killed, Colonel Von Thieleman; wounded, Generals Von Holzendorf and Juergass, and the suite of Prince Blucher, the English Colonel, Harding, and several aides-de-camp. On the 16th, the Prince's horse fell under him, pierced with balls, at the moment of an attack of cavalry, a part of which rode over him. The contusions thereby occasioned in the thigh and shoulders did not, however, hinder him from leading on his troops in person in the battle of the 18th. On the 19th, the Field Marshal had his head-quarters already at Charleroi, and was pursuing the enemy with his accustomed ardour.

Several French generals and officers came over after the battle, and their number was increasing every moment.

*Russian Account.**Copy of a Letter from General Count Pozzo di Borgo
to his Excellency Prince Wolkonsky.*

I have had the honour of giving your Excellency an account of the advantageous action which the Duke of Wellington had fought on the 4-16th of June, at the place called Les Quatre Bras. The movement of Prince Blucher having induced his Grace to remove his head-quarters to Waterloo, on the 5-17th, he took a position in advance of that place, at the point where the great causeway from Brussels to Namur crosses that which leads to Braine la Leud.

Though the ground is open and without any remarkable feature, it rises almost insensibly upon this point, to the distance of half a league. At the right extremity of the front of this elevation there is a farm, consisting of a stone-house, of a surrounding wall, and of a wood, intersected by natural hedges and ditches. It was upon this ground that the Duke resolved to expect the enemy; he placed his batteries, occupied the farm and the garden, and drew up his army along the eminence, protected by its height from the enemy's fire.

The army being composed of different troops, he took the precaution to support each of them by English infantry, all disposed in such a manner as to be able to succour the point threatened.

On the 6-18th, towards noon, the French army, commanded by Buonaparte, began the attack; his first efforts were directed against the farm of which I have made mention. After several attempts, he succeeded, at about half-past one o'clock, in dislodging a part of the troops from it. The Duke hastened to the spot, and ordered two battalions to retake it, and to defend themselves there to the last extremity. His orders were punctually executed.

The enemy then directed two strong columns against our centre. The Duke of Wellington in person led some battalions of infantry against these columns, and Lord Uxbridge conducted the cavalry. They attacked at the point of the bayonet;

the French were overthrown, and their cavalry broken (*culbutée*.) In this charge, one eagle, a standard, and about 1200 prisoners were taken. The victorious troops instantly returned to their positions and re-formed their line.

The attack on the farm did not cease, the enemy penetrated to it, but was never able to establish a footing there.

Buonaparte, seeing that he could not obtain any advantage, manœuvred with all his cavalry and a part of his infantry against our right, tried to outflank it with 17,000 cavalry, and began by a most vigorous attack. The Duke made his dispositions in consequence; the cavalry of both armies charged; the squares of infantry remained immovable, and repulsed every attack; this attempt of the enemy was baffled. At last, about six o'clock, he repeated another attack upon our centre, and succeeded in getting as far as the eminence.

The Duke caused him to be attacked, overthrew him, pursued him, and the rout became general.

Prince Blucher had announced that he would march against the right of the French. On the advance, the two Field Marshals met each other about half-past eight in the evening.

The army of Lord Wellington did not exceed 50,000 actually engaged. The enemy was far superior, especially in cavalry. The Prince Royal of Orange is wounded in the shoulder; it is hoped that he will recover. Lord Uxbridge has had a thigh fractured. Sir Thomas Picton is killed. The Duke's headquarters will be at Nivelles this evening. He is gone to Brussels to make up his dispatches (*pour faire son expedition*.)

P.S.—Just as I am going to send my letter, news is brought that 300 cannon are already taken, and also the equipages of Buonaparte, and prisoners innumerable.

*French Account.**News from the Army—Battle of Ligny under Fleurus.*

Paris, June 21.

On the morning of the 16th, the army occupied the following positions :—

The left wing, commanded by the Marshal Duke of Elchingen, and consisting of the 1st and 2nd corps of infantry, and the 2nd of cavalry, occupied the position of Frasne.

The right wing, commanded by Marshal Grouchy, and composed of the 3rd and 4th corps of infantry, and the 3rd corps of cavalry, occupied the heights in rear of Fleurus.

The Emperor's head-quarters were at Charleroi, where were the Imperial Guard and the 6th corps.

The left wing had orders to march upon Quatre Bras, and the right upon Sombref. The Emperor advanced to Fleurus with his reserve.

The columns of Marshal Grouchy being in march, perceived, after having passed Fleurus, the enemy's army, commanded by Field Marshal Blücher, occupying with its left the heights of the mill of Bussy, the village of Sombref, and extending its cavalry a great way forward on the road to Namur: its right was at St. Amand, and occupied that large village in great force, having before it a ravine, which formed its position.

The Emperor reconnoitred the strength and positions of the enemy, and resolved to attack immediately. It became necessary to change front, the right in advance, and pivoting upon Fleurus.

General Vandamme marched upon St. Amand, General Gerard upon Ligny, and Marshal Grouchy upon Sombref. The 4th division of the 2nd corps, commanded by General Girard, marched in reserve behind the corps of General Vandamme. The Guard was drawn up on the heights of Fleurus, as well as the Cuirassiers of General Milhaud.

At three in the afternoon, these dispositions were finished. The division of General Lefoi, forming part of the corps of General Vandamme, was first engaged, and made itself master of St. Amand, whence it drove out the enemy at the point of the bayonet. It kept its ground during the whole of the en-

gement, at the burial-ground and steeple of St. Amand; but that village, which is very extensive, was the theatre of various combats during the evening; the whole corps of General Vandamme was there engaged, and the enemy there fought in considerable force.

General Girard, placed as a reserve to the corps of General Vandamme, turned the village by its right, and fought there with his accustomed valour. The respective forces were supported on both sides by about sixty pieces of cannon each.

On the right, General Gerard came into action with the 4th corps at the village of Ligny, which was taken and retaken several times.

Marshal Grouchy, on the extreme right, and General Pajol, fought at the village of Sombref. The enemy showed from 80,000 to 90,000 men, and a great number of cannon.

At seven o'clock, we were masters of all the villages situated on the bank of the ravine which covered the enemy's position; but he still occupied, with all his masses, the height of the mill of Bussy.

The Emperor advanced with his Guard to the village of Ligny; General Gerard directed General Pecheux to debouch with what remained of the reserve, almost all the troops having been engaged in that village. Eight battalions of the Guard debouched with fixed bayonets, and behind them, the four squadrons of the Guards, the Cuirassiers of General Delort, those of General Milhaud, and the mounted grenadiers of the Guard. The Old Guard attacked with the bayonet the enemy's columns which were on the heights of Bussy, and in an instant covered the field of battle with dead. The squadron of the Guard attacked and broke a square, and the Cuirassiers repulsed the enemy in all directions. At half-past nine o'clock, we had forty pieces of cannon, several carriages, colours, and prisoners, and the enemy sought safety in a precipitate retreat. At ten o'clock the battle was finished, and we found ourselves masters of all the field of battle.

General Lutzow, a partisan, was taken prisoner. The prisoners assure us that Field Marshal Blucher was wounded. The flower of the Prussian army was destroyed in this battle. Its loss could not be less than 15,000 men. Ours was 3000 killed and wounded.

On the left, Marshal Ney had marched on Quatre Bras, with a division which overthrew an English division which was stationed there, but being attacked by the Prince of Orange, with 25,000 men, partly English, partly Hanoverians in the pay of England, he retired upon his position at Frasne. There a multiplicity of combats took place: the enemy obstinately endeavoured to force it, but in vain. The Duke of Elchingen waited for the 1st corps, which did not arrive till night; he confined himself to maintaining his position. In a square attacked by the 8th Regiment of Cuirassiers, the colours of the 69th Regiment of English Infantry fell into our hands. The Duke of Brunswick was killed. The Prince of Orange has been wounded. We are assured that the enemy had many personages and generals of note killed or wounded; we estimate the loss of the English at from 4000 to 5000 men; ours on this side, was very considerable, it amounts to 4200, killed or wounded. The combat ended with the approach of night. Lord Wellington then evacuated Quatre Bras, and proceeded to Genappe.

In the morning of the 17th, the Emperor repaired to Quatre Bras, whence he marched to attack the English army: he drove it to the entrance of the forest of Soignies, with the left wing and the reserve. The right wing advanced by Sombref, in pursuit of Field Marshal Blucher, who was going towards Wavre, where he appeared to wish to take a position.

At ten o'clock in the evening, the English army occupied Mount St. Jean with its centre, and was in position before the forest of Soignies: it would have required three hours to attack it; we were therefore obliged to postpone it till the next day.

The head-quarters of the Emperor were established at the farm of Cuillon, near Planchenoit. The rain fell in torrents. Thus, on the 16th, the left wing, the right, and the reserve were equally engaged, at a distance of about two leagues.

Battle of Mount St. Jean.

At nine in the morning, the rain having somewhat abated, the 1st corps put itself in motion, and placed itself with the left on the road to Brussels, and opposite the village of Mount St.

Jean, which appeared the centre of the enemy's position. The second corps leaned its right upon the road to Brussels, and its left upon a small wood within cannon-shot of the English army. The Cuirassiers were in reserve behind, and the Guard in reserve upon the heights. The 6th corps, with the cavalry of General D'Aumont, under the order of Count Lobau, were destined to proceed in rear of our right, to oppose a Prussian corps which appeared to have escaped Marshal Grouchy, and to intend to fall upon our right flank—an intention which had been made known to us by our reports, and by the letter of a Prussian general, inclosing an order of battle, and which was taken by our light troops.

The troops were full of ardour. We estimated the force of the English army at 80,000 men. We supposed that the Prussian corps, which might be in line towards the night, might be 15,000 men. The enemy's force then was upwards of 90,000 men; ours less numerous.

At noon, all the preparations being terminated, Prince Jerome, commanding a division of the 2nd corps, and destined to form the extreme left of it, advanced upon the wood of which the enemy occupied a-part. The cannonade began. The enemy supported with thirty pieces of cannon the troops he had sent to keep the wood. We made, also, on our side, dispositions of artillery. At one o'clock, Prince Jerome was master of all the wood, and the whole English army fell back behind a curtain. Count d'Erlon then attacked the village of Mount St. Jean, and supported his attack with eighty pieces of cannon. A terrible cannonade then commenced, which must have occasioned great loss to the English army. All the efforts were made towards the ridge. A brigade of the 1st division of the Count d'Erlon took the village of Mount St. Jean; a second brigade was charged by a corps of English cavalry, which occasioned it much loss. At the same moment, a division of English cavalry charged the battery of Count d'Erlon by its right, and disorganised several pieces; but the Cuirassiers of General Milhaud charged that division, three regiments of which were broken and cut up.

It was three in the afternoon. The Emperor made the Guard advance to place it in the plain upon the ground which the 1st corps had occupied at the outset of the battle; this

corps being already in advance. The Prussian division, whose movement had been foreseen, then engaged with the light troops of Count Lobau, spreading its fire along our whole right flank. It was expedient, before undertaking anything elsewhere, to wait for the event of this attack. Hence all the means in reserve were ready to succour Count Lobau, and overwhelm the Prussian corps when it should be advanced.

This done, the Emperor had the design of leading an attack upon the village of Mount St. Jean, from which we expected a decisive success; but by a movement of impatience, so frequent in our military annals, and which has often been so fatal to us, the cavalry of reserve having perceived a retrograde movement made by the English, to shelter themselves from our batteries, from which they had suffered so much, crowned the heights of Mount St. Jean, and charged the infantry. This movement, which, made ^{at the proper} ~~in~~ time, and supported by the reserve, must have decided the day, made in an isolated manner, and before affairs on the right were terminated, became fatal.

Having no means of countermanding it, the enemy showing many masses of cavalry and infantry, and our two divisions of Cuirassiers being engaged, all our cavalry ran at the same moment to support their comrades. There for three hours numerous charges were made, which enabled us to penetrate several squares, and to take six standards of the English infantry; an advantage out of proportion with the loss which our cavalry experienced by the grape-shot and musket firing. It was impossible to dispose of our reserves of infantry until we had repulsed the flank attack of the Prussian corps.

This attack always prolonged itself perpendicularly upon our right flank. The Emperor sent thither Gen. Duhesme, with the Young Guard, and several batteries of reserve. The enemy was kept in check, repulsed, and fell back—he had exhausted his forces, and we had nothing more to fear.

It was this moment that was indicated for an attack upon the centre of the enemy. As the Cuirassiers suffered by the grape-shot, we sent four battalions of the middle Guard to protect the Cuirassiers, keep the position, and, if possible, disengage and draw back into the plain a part of our cavalry.

Two other battalions were sent to keep themselves *en potence*

upon the extreme left of the division which had manœuvred upon our flanks, in order not to have any uneasiness on that side; the rest was disposed in reserve, part to occupy the *potence*, in rear of Mount St. Jean, part upon the ridge in rear of the field of battle, which formed our position of retreat.

In this state of affairs the battle was gained; we occupied all the positions which the enemy occupied at the outset of the battle: our cavalry having been too soon, and ill employed, we could no longer hope for decisive success; but Marshal Grouchy, having learned the movement of the Prussian corps, marched upon the rear of that corps, which insured us a signal success for next day.

After eight hours' fire and charges of infantry and cavalry, all the army saw with joy the battle gained, and the field of battle in our power.

At half-after eight o'clock, the four battalions of the middle Guard, who had been sent to the ridge on the other side of Mount St. Jean, in order to support the Cuirassiers, being greatly annoyed by the grape-shot, endeavoured to carry the batteries with the bayonet. At the end of the day, a charge directed against their flank by several English squadrons put them in disorder. The fugitives recrossed the ravine. Several regiments near at hand seeing some troops belonging to the Guard in confusion, believed it was the Old Guard, and in consequence, were thrown into disorder. Cries of "All is lost! the Guard is driven back!" were heard on every side. The soldiers pretend, even, that on many points, ill disposed persons, placed for the purpose, called out, "*Sauve qui peut.*" However this may be, a panic at once spread itself throughout the whole field of battle, and they threw themselves in the greatest disorder on the line of communication: soldiers, cannoneers, caissons, all pressed to this point; the Old Guard, which was in reserve, was infected, and was itself hurried along.

In an instant, the army was nothing but a confused mass; all the soldiers of all arms were mixed, and it was utterly impossible to rally a single corps. The enemy, who perceived this astonishing confusion, attacked with their cavalry. The disorder increased; and such was the confusion, owing to night

coming on, that it was impossible to rally the troops, and point out to them the error.

Thus a battle terminated—a day of false manœuvres rectified, still greater successes insured for the next day—all was lost by a moment of panic terror. Even the squadrons of service, drawn up by the side of the Emperor, were overthrown and disorganised by these tumultuous waves, and there was then nothing else to be done but to follow the torrent. The parks of reserve, the baggage which had not repassed the Sambre—in short, everything that was on the field of battle remained in the power of the enemy. It was impossible to wait for our troops on our right; every one knows what the bravest army in the world is when thus confusedly mixed, and when its organisation no longer exists.

The Emperor crossed the Sambre at Charleroi, at five o'clock in the morning of the 19th. Phillippeville and Avesnes have been given as the point of reunion. Prince Jerome, Gen. Morand, and other generals, have there already rallied a part of the army. Marshal Grouchy, with the corps on the right, is moving on the Lower Sambre.

The loss of the enemy must have been very great, if we may judge from the number of standards we have taken from him, and from the retrograde movements which he made: ours cannot be calculated till after the troops shall have been collected. Before the disorder broke out, we had already experienced a very considerable loss, particularly in our cavalry, so fatally, though so bravely engaged. Notwithstanding these losses, this brave cavalry constantly kept the position it had taken from the English, and only abandoned it when the tumult and disorder of the field of battle forced it to do so. In the midst of the night, and of the obstacles which encumbered their rout, it could not preserve its own organisation.

The artillery has, as usual, covered itself with glory. The carriages belonging to the head-quarters remained in their ordinary position: no retrograde movement being judged necessary. In the course of the night, they fell into the enemy's hands.

Such has been the issue of the battle of Mount St. Jean, glorious for the French armies, and yet so fatal.

*Letter of the Marshal Prince of Moskowa to his Excellency the
Duke of Otranto.*

M. LE DUC,—The most false and defamatory reports have been spreading for some days over the public mind, upon the conduct which I have pursued during the short and unfortunate campaign. The journals have repeated these odious calumnies, and appear to lend them credit. After having fought for twenty-five years for my country, and shed my blood for its glory and independence, there are yet persons who have dared to accuse me of treason; and I, even I, am pointed out to the people, and the army itself, as the author of the disaster which it has just experienced.

Forced to break silence, while it is always painful to speak of oneself, and above all, when it is to repel calumnies, I address myself to you, sir, as the President of the Provisional Government, for the purpose of laying before you a faithful statement of the events I have witnessed.

On the 11th of June, I received an order from the Minister of War to repair to the Imperial head-quarters. I had no command and no information upon the composition and strength of the army. Neither the Emperor nor his Minister had given me any previous hint, from which I could infer that I should be employed in the present campaign. I was, consequently, taken by surprise, without horses, without accoutrements, and without money; and I was obliged to borrow the necessary expenses of my journey. Having arrived on the 12th at Laon, on the 13th at Avesnes, and on the 14th at Beaumont, I purchased in this last city, two horses from the Marshal Duke of Treviso, with which I repaired on the 15th to Charleroi, accompanied by my first Aide-de-camp, the only officer who attended me. I arrived at the moment when the enemy, attacked by our troops, was retreating upon Fleurus and Gosselies.

The Emperor ordered me immediately to put myself at the head of the 1st and 2nd corps of infantry, commanded by Lieut. Gens. d'Erlon and Reille, of the division of light cavalry of Lieut. Gen. Piné, of a division of light cavalry of the Guard, under the command of Lieut. Gens. Lefebvre Desnouettes and

Colbert, and of two divisions of cavalry of the Count Valmy, forming in all eight divisions of infantry, and four of cavalry. With these troops, a part of which only I had as yet under my immediate command, I pursued the enemy, and forced him to evacuate Gosselies, Frasnes, Mellet, and Heppignies. There they took up a position for the night, with the exception of the 1st corps, which was still at Marchiennes, and which did not join me till the following day.

On the 16th, I received orders to attack the English, in their position at Quatre Bras. We advanced towards the enemy with an enthusiasm difficult to be described. Nothing resisted our impetuosity. The battle became general, and victory was no longer doubtful; when, at the moment that I was about to order up the 1st corps of infantry, which up to that time had been left by me in reserve at Frasnes, I learned that the Emperor had disposed of it without letting me know of it, as well as of the division of Girard, of the 2nd corps, in order to direct them upon St. Amand, and to support his left wing, which was vigorously engaged with the Prussians.

The shock which this intelligence gave me was terrible. Having no longer under me more than three divisions, instead of eight, upon which I calculated, I was obliged to renounce the hopes of victory; and in spite of all my efforts, in spite of the intrepidity and devotion of my troops, I could after that do no more than maintain myself in my position till the close of the day. About nine o'clock, the 1st corps was sent me by the Emperor, to whom it had been of no service. Thus 25,000 or 30,000 men were, I may say, paralysed, and were idly marched about during the whole of the battle, from the right to the left, and the left to the right, with arms in their hands, and without firing a single shot.

It is impossible for me, Sir, not to pause here for a moment, in order to bring before your view all the consequences of this false movement, and in general of the bad arrangements during the whole of the day. By what fatality, for example, did the Emperor, instead of leading all his forces against Lord Wellington, who would have been taken unawares, and was unprepared, consider this attack as secondary? How did the Emperor, after the passage of the Sambre, conceive it possible to fight two

battles on the same day? This, however, is what took place against forces double ours, and what military men, who were witnesses of it, can scarcely yet comprehend. Instead of this, had he left a corps of observation to watch the Prussians, and marched with his most powerful masses to support me, the English army had undoubtedly been destroyed between Quatre Bras and Genappes; and this position, which separated the two allied armies, being once in our power, would have enabled the Emperor easily to have turned the right of the Prussians, and to have crushed them in their turn. The general opinion in France, and especially in the army, was, that the Emperor would bend his whole efforts to annihilate first the English army: and circumstances were very favourable for this purpose; but fate ordered otherwise.

On the 17th, the army marched in the direction of Mount St. Jean. On the 18th, the battle began towards one o'clock; and though the bulletin which gives an account of it, makes no mention of me, it is not necessary for me to say that I was present. Lieut. Gen. Count Drouot has already spoken of that battle in the House of Peers. His narrative is accurate, with the exception of some important facts, which he has passed over in silence, or of which he was ignorant, and which it is my duty to declare. About seven o'clock in the evening, after the most frightful carnage which I have ever witnessed, General Labec-toyre came to me with a message from the Emperor, that Marshal Grouchy had arrived on our right, and was attacking the left of the English and Prussians united.

This general officer, in riding along the lines, spread this intelligence among the soldiers, whose courage and devotion remained unshaken, and who gave new proofs of them at that moment, in spite of the fatigue which they had undergone. A few moments after, what was my astonishment, I should rather say, indignation, when I learned that so far from Marshal Grouchy having arrived to support us, as the whole army had been assured, between 40,000 and 50,000 were attacking our extreme right, and forcing it to retire.

Whether the Emperor was deceived with regard to the time when the Marshal could support him, or whether the march of the Marshal had been retarded by the efforts of the enemy

longer than was calculated upon, the fact is, that at the moment when his arrival was announced to us, he was only near Wavre upon the Dyle, which to us was the same as if he had been a hundred leagues from the field of battle.

A short time afterwards, I saw four regiments of the middle Guard arrive, conducted by the Emperor in person, who with these troops wished to renew the attack, and to penetrate the centre of the enemy. He ordered me to lead them on, together with General Friant; generals, officers, and soldiers all displayed the greatest intrepidity, but this body of troops was too weak to resist, for a long time, the forces opposed to it by the enemy; and it was soon necessary to renounce the hope which this attack had for a few moments inspired. General Friant was struck by a ball by my side, and I myself had my horse killed, and was thrown down. The brave men who shall return from this terrible attack will, I hope, do me the justice to say, that they saw me on foot, with sword in hand, during the whole of the evening, and that I only quitted this scene of carnage among the last, and at the moment when retreat could no longer be prevented.

At the same time the Prussians maintained their offensive movements, and our right sensibly retired, the English advanced in their turn.

There still remained to us four squares of the Old Guard, advantageously placed, to protect the retreat. These brave grenadiers, the choice of the army, forced successively to retire, only yielded ground foot by foot, till, finally overwhelmed by numbers, they were almost entirely annihilated. From that moment, the retrograde movement was distinct, and the army formed nothing but a confused mass. There was not, however, a total rout, nor the cry of "*Sauve qui peut*," as has been calumniously stated in the bulletin.

As for myself, constantly in the rear-guard, which I followed on foot, having had all my horses killed, worn out with fatigue, covered with contusions, and having no longer strength to march, I owe my life to a corporal of the Guard, who supported me on the march, and did not quit me during this retreat. About eleven at night, I found Lieutenant-General Lefebvre Desnouettes; and one of his officers, Major Schmidt, had the

generosity to give me the only horse that remained to him. In this manner I arrived at Marchienne-au-Pont at four o'clock in the morning, alone, without any officers, not knowing what had become of the Emperor, of whom I had entirely lost sight before the end of the battle, and who, I was allowed to believe, might be either killed or taken prisoner. General Pamphile Lacroix, chief of the staff of the second corps, whom I found in this town, having told me that the Emperor was at Charleroi, I was led to suppose that his Majesty was going to put himself at the head of Marshal Grouchy's corps, to cover the Sambre, and to facilitate to the troops the means of rallying towards Avesnes, and with this persuasion, I went to Beaumont; but parties of cavalry following us very close, and having already intercepted the roads of Maubeuge and Philipville, I became sensible of the total impossibility of stopping a single soldier on that point to oppose the progress of a victorious enemy. I continued my march upon Avesnes, where I could obtain no intelligence of what had become of the Emperor.

In this state of things, having no intelligence either of his Majesty or of the Major-General, the confusion increasing every moment, and, with the exception of some fragments of the Guard and of the line, every one followed his own course, I determined immediately to go to Paris, by St. Quentin, to disclose as quickly as possible the true state of affairs to the Minister of War, that he might at least send to the army some fresh troops, and, with the utmost speed, take the measures which circumstances rendered necessary. On my arrival at Bourget, three leagues from Paris, I learned that the Emperor had passed there at nine o'clock.

Such, M. le Duc, is the history of this calamitous campaign.

Now I ask those who have survived this fine and numerous army, how I can be accused of the disaster of which it has been the victim, and of which our military annals furnish no example. I have, it is said, betrayed my country—I, who to serve it, have always shown a zeal which I perhaps have carried too far, and which may have misled me; but this calumny is not, nor can be supported by any fact, nor by any circumstance or presumption. But from whence do these odious reports, which spread all at once with frightful rapidity, proceed? If, in the researches

which I could make on this subject, I did not fear almost as much to discover, as to be ignorant of the truth, I would say that everything tends to prove that I have been unworthily deceived, and that it is attempted to cover with the veil of treason the faults and extravagancies of this campaign; faults which great care has been taken not to confess in the bulletins that have appeared, and against which I in vain raised that voice of truth which I have made to resound in the House of Peers. I expect, from the justice of your Excellency and from your indulgence to me, that you will cause this letter to be inserted in the journals, and give it the greatest possible publicity.

I renew to your Excellency, &c.,

MARSHAL PRINCE OF MOSKOWA.

(Signed) NEY.

Paris, June 26, 1815.

From the "Moniteur Universel," of Saturday, June 24, 1815.

Report addressed to the Emperor.

Dinant, June 20, 1815.

It was not till after seven in the evening of the 18th of June that I received the letter of the Duke of Dalmatia, which directed me to march on St. Lambert, and to attack General Bulow. I fell in with the enemy as I was marching on Wavre. He was immediately attacked and driven into Wavre, and General Vandamme's corps attacked that town, and was warmly engaged.

The portico of Wavre on the right of the Dyle was carried, but much difficulty was experienced in debouching on the other side. General Gerard received a wound (which happily is not mortal) by a ball in the breast, while endeavouring to carry the mill of Bielge in order to pass the river, but in which he did not succeed; and Lieut.-Gen. Aix had been killed in the attack on the town. In this state of things, being impatient to debouch on Mount St. Lambert, and to contribute to your Majesty's success on that important day, I directed on Limale the Cavallerie of Payal, the division of Teste, and two of the

divisions of General Gerard, to force the passage of the Dyle and march against General Bulow. The corps of Vandamme, in the meantime, maintained the attack on Wavre, and on the mill of Bielge, whence the enemy showed an intention to debouch, but which I did not conceive he was capable of effecting; the position and courage of our troops made me feel assured that he could not succeed. My movement on Limale took some time, on account of the distance. I, however, arrived there, passed the river, and the heights were carried by the division of Vichery and the cavalry. Night did not permit us to advance farther, and I no longer heard the cannon on the side where your Majesty was engaged.

I halted in this situation until daylight. Wavre and Bielge were occupied by the Prussians, who, at three in the morning of the 19th attacked in their turn, wishing to take advantage of the difficult position in which I was, and expecting to drive me into the defile, and take the artillery which had debouched and make me re-pass the Dyle. Their efforts were fruitless; the intrepidity of the troops enabled me to repulse all the attacks, to overthrow the Prussians, and, by the division Teste, to carry the village of Bielge. The brave General Penne was killed.

General Vandamme then passed one of his divisions by Bielge, and carried with ease the heights of Wavre, and along the whole of my line the success was complete. I was in front of Rozierne, preparing to march on Brussels, when I received the sad intelligence of the loss of the Battle of Waterloo.

The officer who brought it informed me that your Majesty was retreating on the Sambre, without being able to indicate any particular point on which I should direct my march. Engaged throughout my whole line, I ceased to pursue, and began my retrograde movement.

The retreating enemy did not think of following me. I marched to Templeux at Gembloux, having my light cavalry at Mari de St. Denis, and my Dragoons marching on Namur. Learning that the enemy had already passed the Sambre, and was on my flank, and not being sufficiently strong to make a diversion in favour of your Majesty's army, without compromising that which I commanded, I marched on Namur—the

fourth corps by the road from Namur to Charleroi, and the third by the direct road from Templeux.

At this moment, the rears of the two columns were attacked. That of the right made a retrograde movement sooner than was expected, which endangered for a moment the retreat of the left; good dispositions repaired everything, and two pieces of cannon which had been taken were recovered by the brave 20th Dragoons, under the orders of Colonel Briquerville, who, besides, took an howitzer from the enemy. The weak squares of the (*sic*) Regiment, charged by a numerous cavalry, waited till they came close up, and caused them an enormous loss; thus proving what can be done by good dispositions, added to a calm attitude, and a well directed fire. The enemy's cavalry, charged in its turn by the 1st Hussars, under the orders of Camp-Marshal Clary, left a great many prisoners in our hands. We entered Namur without loss. The long defile which extends from this place to Dinant, in which only a single column can march, and the embarrassment arising from the numerous transports of wounded which I had with me, rendered it necessary to hold for a considerable time the town, in which I could not find the means of blowing up the bridge. I entrusted the defence of Namur to General Vandamme, who, with his usual intrepidity, maintained himself there till eight in the evening; so that nothing was left behind, and I occupied Dinant.

The enemy has lost some thousands of men in the attack on Namur, where the contest was extraordinarily obstinate. The troops have performed their duty in a manner worthy of praise.

I am, with respect, Sire,

Your Majesty's very faithful subject,

MARSHAL COUNT GROUCHY.

Londres, Gazette Extraordinaire, 22 Juin, 1815.

Lettre du Duc Wellington au Comte Bathurst.

Waterloo, 19 Juin, 1815.

MILORD,—Napoléon ayant réuni du 10 au 14 de ce mois, les premier, deuxième, troisième, quatrième et sixième corps de l'armée Française, ainsi que la garde Impériale, et presque toute la cavallerie, sur la Sambre et entre cette rivière et la Meuse, marcha en avant le 15, à la pointe du jour, et attaqua les postes Prussiens établis à Thuin et à Lobez, sur la Sambre.

Je n'appris ces évènements que dans la soirée du 15; et sur-le-champ je donnai l'ordre aux troupes de se préparer à marcher; ensuite je les fis marcher par la gauche, aussitôt que j'eus avis que ce mouvement de l'ennemi sur Charleroy étoit l'attaque réelle.

L'ennemi repoussa, ce jour-là, les postes Prussiens de leurs positions sur la Sambre. Le Général Ziethen qui commandoit le corps de troupes établi à Charleroy, se retira sur Fleurus. Le Maréchal Prince Blucher concentra l'armée Prussienne à Sombref, occupant les villages de Saint Amand et de Ligny, situés devant sa position.

L'ennemi continua sa marche sur la route de Charleroy à Bruxelles, et dans la soirée du même jour, le 15, il attaqua une brigade de l'armée des Pays-bas, sous le commandement du Prince de Weimar, postée à Frasne, et la força de se retirer jusqu'à la ferme nommée les Quatre Bras, située sur le chemin.

Le Prince d'Orange la renforça aussitôt d'une autre brigade de la même division, commandée par le Général Perpoucher, et le lendemain matin, il reprit une partie du terrain qu'il avoit perdu; ce qui le rendit maître des communications entre la position du Maréchal Blucher d'un côté et Nivelles et Bruxelles de l'autre.

Sur ces entrefaites, j'avois fait marcher toute l'armée sur les Quatre Bras, et la cinquième division aux ordres du Lieutenant-Général Sir Thomas Picton arriva environ à deux heures et demie du soir, suivie du corps de troupes du Duc de Brunswick, et ensuite du contingent de Nassau.

En même temps l'ennemi attaqua le Prince Blucher avec

toutes ses forces, à l'exception du premier et du deuxième corps, et d'un corps de cavalerie du Général Kellermann, qui attaquèrent notre position aux Quatre Bras.

L'armée Prussienne défendit sa position avec sa bravoure et sa persévérance ordinaire contre un ennemi très supérieur en nombre; le quatrième corps, sous les ordres du Général Bulow, ne l'ayant pas encore rejoint et étant attaqué moi-même, il me fut impossible de le secourir, comme je le desirois. Les troupes, surtout la cavalerie, qui avoient une longue marche à faire, pour me joindre, n'étoient pas encore arrivées.

Nous nous maintenîmes aussi dans notre position, et nous vinmes à bout de vaincre et de repousser entièrement les efforts que fit l'ennemi pour s'en rendre maître. Il nous attaqua à plusieurs reprises avec un gros corps d'infanterie et de cavalerie, soutenu par une nombreuse et formidable artillerie, il fit plusieurs charges de cavalerie sur notre infanterie, et fut toujours repoussé avec la plus grande fermeté. Dans cette affaire, S. A. R. le Prince d'Orange, le Duc de Brunswick, le Lieutenant-général Sir Thomas Picton, le Major-général Sir James Kempt, et Sir Denis Pack, qui étoient engagés depuis le commencement de l'affaire, se distinguèrent, ainsi que le Lieutenant-général Baron Alten, le Major-général Halket, le Lieutenant-général Cooke, les Majors-généraux Maitland et Byng, qui arrivèrent successivement. Les troupes de la cinquième division, et celles du corps de Brunswick eurent un engagement long et vif et se conduisirent avec la plus grande bravoure. Je dois surtout citer les vingt-huitième, quarante-deuxième, soixante-dix-neuvième, et quatre-vingt-douzième régiments, ainsi que le bataillon d'Hanovriens.

Notre perte a été considérable, comme votre Seigneurie le verra par les états ci inclus. J'ai particulièrement à regretter S. A. S. le Duc de Brunswick, qui a été tué en combattant vaillamment à la tête de ses troupes.

Quoique le Maréchal Blucher eût conservé sa position à Sombref, il se trouva très affaibli par la violence du combat qu'il avoit eu à soutenir, et le quatrième corps n'étant pas arrivé, il se decida à se retirer et à concentrer son armée sur Wavre. Il se mit en marche dans la nuit après que l'affaire fut finie.

Ce mouvement du Maréchal m'obligea à en faire un correspondant, et le lendemain 17, à dix heures de matin, je me retirai de la ferme des Quatre Bras, sur Waterloo en passant par Jenappe.

L'ennemi ne fit aucun effort pour poursuivre le Maréchal Blucher; au contraire, une patrouille que j'envoyai dans la matinée à Sombref, trouva tout tranquille, et les vedettes de l'ennemi se retirèrent à l'approche de la patrouille. L'ennemi ne fit non plus aucune tentative pour inquiéter notre arrière garde, quoique notre retraite s'opérât en plein jour; il se contenta de faire suivre par un gros corps de cavalerie, de son aile droite, la cavalerie sous les ordres du Comte d'Uxbridge; ce mouvement fournit l'occasion à Lord Uxbridge de charger à la tête du premier régiment des gardes, au moment où l'ennemi débouchoit du village de Jenappe. Sa Seigneurie se loue de la conduite de ce régiment dans cette occasion.

La position que je pris en avant de Waterloo croisoit les grandes routes de Charleroy et de Nivelles; la droite étoit refusée et appuyée à un ravin près de Merbe Braine, qui fut occupé; la gauche s'étendoit jusqu'à une éminence derrière le hameau Ter-la-Haye, qui fut également occupé. Devant la droite de notre centre, et près la route de Nivelles, nous occupions la maison et le jardin du Hougoumont, qui couvroit ce flanc refusé; devant la gauche de notre centre, nous occupions la ferme de la Haye-Sainte. De notre gauche, nous communiquions par Ohaim avec le Maréchal Prince Blucher, qui se trouvoit à Wavre. Ce maréchal m'avoit promis, dans le cas où nous serions attaqués, de me soutenir par un ou plusieurs de ses corps, selon que ce seroit nécessaire.

Dans la nuit du 17 et dans la matinée d'hier, l'ennemi à l'exception du troisième corps, qui avoit été envoyé pour observer le Maréchal Blucher, rassembla toute son armée sur une chaîne de hauteurs qui se trouvoit devant notre front, et vers dix heures il attaqua avec la plus grande vigueur notre poste à Hougoumont. J'avois fait occuper ce poste par un détachement de la brigade des gardes sous les ordres du Général Byng, qui se trouva en position derrière la ferme. Ce poste fut pendant quelque temps sous les ordres du Lieutenant-colonel Macdonel,

et ensuite sous ceux du Colonel Home; et il m'est agréable de pouvoir ajouter que pendant toute la journée il fut maintenu avec la plus grande intrépidité par ces braves troupes, nonobstant les efforts répétés de fortes colonnes ennemies pour s'en emparer.

Cette attaque sur la droite de notre centre fut accompagnée d'une vive canonnade sur toute notre ligne, dont l'objet étoit de soutenir les charges de cavallerie et d'infanterie faites à plusieurs reprises sur ce point, tantôt ensemble, tantôt séparément. Dans une de ces charges, l'ennemi emporta la ferme de la Haye-Sainte; le détachement du bataillon léger de la legion qui l'occupoit ayant épuisé toutes ses munitions, et ne pouvant en recevoir, parceque l'ennemi occupoit la seule communication que nous avions avec ce point.

L'ennemi chargea à plusieurs reprises notre infanterie avec sa cavallerie, mais toutes ses attaques furent sans succès, et donnèrent à notre cavallerie l'occasion de faire plusieurs charges, dans une desquelles se sont particulièrement distinguées la brigade de Lord E. Somerset, composée des gardes du corps, des gardes à cheval, et du premier régiment de dragons de la garde, et celle du Major-général Sir W. Ponsonby, qui fit un grand nombre de prisonniers et a pris un aigle.

Ces attaques furent répétés jusques vers sept heures du soir, lorsque l'ennemi fit une attaque désespérée avec sa cavallerie et son infanterie, soutenues par le feu de l'artillerie, pour forcer la gauche de notre centre près de la ferme de la Haye-Sainte. Après un combat obstiné, il fut défait, et ayant remarqué que ses troupes se retiroient de cette attaque dans un grande désordre, que la marche du corps de Bulow par Frichemont sur Planchenoit et la Belle Alliance se faisoit avec succès ainsi que je pus l'apercevoir par le feu de ses canons, et que le Maréchal Blucher avoit joint en personne avec un corps de son armée la gauche de notre ligne par Ohain, je me décidai à attaquer l'ennemi, et je fis sur le champ avancer toute la ligne d'infanterie soutenue par la cavallerie et artillerie.

L'attaque réussit complètement sur tous les points, l'ennemi fut chassé de sa position sur les hauteurs, et se retira dans le plus grand desordre, laissant derrière lui, autant que je pus

l'estimer, 150 pièces de canon avec leurs munitions qui tombèrent dans nos mains. Je continuai à le poursuivre bien avant dans la nuit, et je ne cessai qu'à raison de la fatigue de nos troupes, qui combattoient depuis douze heures, et parceque le Maréchal Blucher, avec qui je me trouvai sur la même route, m'assura qu'il poursuivroit l'ennemi pendant toute la nuit. Il m'a fait savoir ce matin qu'il avoit pris à Jenappe soixante pièces de canon de la garde Impériale, et plusieurs voitures, bagages, &c., appartenant à Bonaparte.

Je me propose de marcher ce matin sur Nivelles, et de ne pas discontinuer mes opérations.

Votre Seigneurie doit observer, que l'on n'a pu se battre avec tant d'acharnement ni obtenir de si grands avantages sans une perte considérable, et c'est avec bien de regrets que je dois ajouter que la notre a été immense. S. M. a perdu dans le Lieutenant-général Sir Thomas Picton un officier qui s'étoit fréquemment distingué à son service ; il est mort glorieusement en conduisant sa division à une charge à la baïonnette, qui a repoussé une des plus sérieuses attaques que l'ennemi eût faites sur notre position.

Le Comte Uxbridge, après avoir combattu avec succès pendant toute la journée, a reçu presque au dernier coup de feu une blessure qui, je crains, privera S. M. pour quelque temps de ses services.

S. A. R. le Prince d'Orange s'est distingué par sa bravoure et sa conduite, jusqu'au moment où il a été blessé à l'épaule, d'une balle de fusil, ce qui l'a obligé de quitter le champ de bataille.

J'ai pourtant la satisfaction d'annoncer à V. S. que l'armée dans aucune occasion ne s'est mieux conduite. La division des gardes du Lieutenant-général Cooke, qui est grièvement blessé, les Majors-Généraux Maitland et Byng, ont donné un exemple qui a été suivi par tous, et il n'y a point d'officier ni de corps de toute l'armée qui ne se soient bien conduits.

Je dois pourtant recommander particulièrement à l'attention de S. A. R. le Lieutenant-général Sir Henri Clinton, le Major-général Adam, le Lieutenant-général Charles Baron Alten, grièvement blessé, ainsi que le Major-général Colin Halket;

les Colonels Ompteda, Mitchell, qui commandoient chacun une brigade de la quatrième division; les Majors-généraux Sir James Kempt et Sir Denis Pack, les Majors-généraux Lambert, Lord E. Somerset, Sir William Ponsonby, Sir Charles Grant, Sir H. Vivian, Sir O. Vandeleur, et Comte Dornberg. Je dois aussi beaucoup dans cette occasion, comme dans toutes les autres, à la co-opération et à l'habileté du Général Lord Hill.

L'artillerie et le génie ont été dirigés à ma plus grande satisfaction par les Colonels Sir G. Wood et Smith, et j'ai tout lieu d'être content de la conduite de l'Adjudant-général Major-général Barnes, qui a été blessé, et du Quartier-maître-général Colonel Delancy, qui a été tué par un boulet de canon au milieu de l'affaire. La perte de cet officier est en ce moment fort à regretter pour le service de S. M., ainsi que pour moi en particulier. Je dois aussi beaucoup à la co-opération du Lieutenant-colonel Lord Fitzroy Somerset, qui a été grièvement blessé, ainsi qu'aux officiers de mon état-major qui personnellement a beaucoup souffert dans l'affaire. Le Lieutenant-colonel Sir Alexander Gordon, qui est mort de ses blessures, étoit un officier de la plus grande espérance; c'est une grande perte pour le service de S. M.

Le Général Krusse, au service de Nassau, s'est également conduit à ma satisfaction, ainsi que le Général Trip, commandant la brigade de grosse cavalerie, et le Général Vanhope, commandant une brigade d'infanterie du Roy des Pays Bas.

Les Généraux Pozzo di Borgo, Vincent, Muffling, et Alava ont assisté à toute l'affaire, et m'ont rendu tous les services qui étoient en leur pouvoir. Le Général Vincent est blessé, mais j'espère que sa blessure n'est pas sérieuse, et le Général Pozzo di Borgo a reçu une contusion.

Je ne parlerois pas d'après mes sentimens si je n'attribuois pas au Maréchal Blucher et à l'armée Prussienne l'heureux résultat de cette terrible journée, par les secours qu'ils m'ont donnés, avec une si grande cordialité, et si à propos.

Le mouvement du Général Bulow sur les flancs de l'ennemi, a été décisif; et si je ne m'étois pas trouvé moi-même dans la situation de faire l'attaque qui produisit le dernier effet, il auroit forcé les François à se retirer quand même leurs attaques

n'auroient pas réussi, les auroit au moins empêchés d'en tirer avantage, si malheureusement elles avoient eu du succès.

J'envoie avec cette dépêche deux aigles que nos troupes ont prises dans l'affaire, et que le Major Percy aura l'honneur de mettre aux pieds de S. A. R. Je prends la liberté de le recommander à la protection de V. S.

J'ai l'honneur, etc.,

(Signé)

WELLINGTON.

P.S.—Depuis que j'ai écrit le ci-dessus j'ai reçu le rapport que le Major-général Sir W. Ponsonby a été tué, et en annonçant cette nouvelle à votre Seigneurie, je dois ajouter l'expression de la peine que j'éprouve à la perte d'un officier qui avoit déjà rendu des services très brillants et importants, et qui faisait l'ornement de sa profession.

2^{me} P.S.—Je n'ai pas encore reçu les relevés des morts et des blessés, mais je joins une liste des officiers tués et blessés pendant les deux journées, en tant qu'on a pu les préparer sans les relevés, et je suis heureux de pouvoir ajouter que le Colonel Delancy n'est pas mort, et qu'on entretient même de fortes espérances de son rétablissement.

Suplemento á la Gaceta de Madrid del Juéves 13 de Julio de 1815.

Continuacion del artículo de oficio.

El teniente General de los Rs. ejércitos D. Miguel de Alava ministro plenipotenciario de S. M. en Holanda, ha dirigido al Exmo. Sr. D. Pedro Cevallos, primer Secretario de Estado y del Despacho, la carta siguiente: Exmo. Sr. Muy Sr. mio: El poco tiempo que medió entre la salida del correo y la victoria del 18 no me permitió escribir á V. E. con la extension que habria deseado; y aunque el ejército va á marchar en este instante, y yo salgo tambien para la Haya á entregar mis credenciales, que no he recibido hasta esta misma mañana, sin embargo daré á V. E. algunos detalles sobre este importante suceso, que no será extraño nos acarree el fin de la guerra mucho antes que podiamos esperarlo.

Tengo escrito á V. E. con fha. del 16 que Bonaparte, marchando de Maubeuge y Phillipville habia atacado los puestos Prusianos sobre el Sambre, y que arrojándolos de Charleroi habia entrado en aquella ciudad el dia 15.

El 16 mandó el duque de Wellington reunir su ejército en el punto llamado los Cuatro Brazos, donde se cruzan los caminos de Namur á Nivelles y de Bruselas á Charleroi, y él en persona se dirigió á dicho punto á cosa de las siete de aquella mañana.

A su llegada encontró al Príncipe hereditario de Orange, que con una division de su cuerpo entretenia al enemigo, dando tiempo para que se reuniesen los demas del ejército.

Ya para entonces llegaba la division Ynglesa del General Picton con la cual mantuvo el Lord un combate desigual contra mas de 30 mil enemigos, sin perder una sola pulgada de terreno. Las guardias Ynglesas, varios regimientos de infantería, y la brigada Escocesa se llenaron de gloria en este dia, y Lord Wellington me dijo al dia siguiente que jamas habia visto á su tropa conducirse mejor en tantos años como hacia que la mandaba.

Los coraceros franceses sufrieron tambien mucho por su parte, porque fiados en sus corazas se acercaron tanto á los cuadros ingleses que llegaron á matar con sus espadas á los gefes del 42; pero aquellos valientes sin atemorizarse por esto lucieron un fuego tan sostenido que el terreno quedó sembrado de coraceros y de sus caballos.

Las tropas fueron llegando entre tanto, y la noche puso fin al combate por este lado.

Durante este tiempo Bonaparte combatia con el resto de sus fuerzas contra el Mariscal Blucher, con quien empeñó un combate muy sangriento á las cinco de la tarde, desde cuyo tiempo hasta la hora de las nueve de la noche fué rechazado constantemente por los Prusianos, con gran pérdida por ambos lados. Pero en aquel momento hizo cargar á su caballería con tal vigor, que rompieron la línea Prusiana de infantería, é introdugeron el desorden y confusion en toda ella.

Sea que Bonaparte no percibiese este incidente, ó que hubiese experimentado una gran pérdida, ó lo que es mas

probable, que el Mariscal Blucher hubiese restablecido la batalla, ello es que no sacó ventaja alguna de esta casualidad, y que le dejó tranquilo toda la noche del 16.

Lord Wellington, que habia reunido para la mañana del 17 todo su ejército en la posicion de los Cuatro Brazos, estaba tomando sus medidas para atacar al enemigo, cuando recibió un aviso del Mariscal Blucher que le participaba los sucesos del dia anterior con el incidente que le habia arrancado la victoria de entre las manos; añadiendo que la pérdida que habia experimentado era tal, que se veia precisado á retirarse á Wavre sobre nuestra izquierda, donde se le reuniria el cuerpo de Bulow, y que el 19 estaria pronto para cuanto quisiera emprender.

En consecuencia tuvo el Lord que retirarse al momento y ejecutó su retirada con tal maestría que el enemigo no se atrevió á incomodarle en ella: tomó posicion en Brain l'Allen, delante del gran bosque de Soignie, segun tenia determinado de antemano, y colocó su cuartel general en Waterloo.

Yo me incorporé con el ejército en aquella mañana, aunque todavia no habia recibido las órdenes para ello, porque creí servir a S. M. mejor de este modo, y cumplir con las de V. E. al mismo tiempo, y esta determinacion me ha proporcionado la satisfaccion de haber presenciado la batalla mas importante que se haya dado en muchos siglos, por sus consecuencias, por su duracion, y el talento de los gefes que mandaban en ambas partes, y porque puede decirse pendia de su resultado la paz del mundo y la seguridad futura de toda la Europa.

La posicion ocupada por el Lord era muy buena; pero tenia hacia el centro varios puntos débiles que necesitaban buenas tropas para guardarla, y mucha ciencia y sabiduría de parte del General en gefe. Uno y otro se halló en abundancia en las tropas Ynglesas y el ilustre caudillo que las mandaba, y puede asegurarse sin agravio de nadie que á ambos pertenece la mayor parte ó toda la gloria de este dia.

A la derecha de la posicion, y un poco adelante, hay una casa de campo cuya importancia conoció en breve Lord Wellington, como que sin ella no podia atacarse la posicion por este lado y debia por esta razon considerarse como su llave.

El Duque confió este punto importante á tres compañías de guardias Ynglesas al mando del Lord Saltoun y se trabajó durante la noche del 17 en fortificarlo del mejor modo posible cubriendo el jardin de ella y un bosque que la sirve de parque con tropas de Nassau diseminadas como tiradores.

A las 10½ se observó movimiento en la línea enemiga y que muchos oficiales iban y venian á un punto determinádo donde habia un cuerpo de infantería muy considerable que como supimos despues era la guardia Ymperial á cuyo lado se hallaba Bonaparte en persona, y era el punto de donde salian todas las órdenes. Las masas enemigas iban formándose entre tanto y todo anunciaba la proximidad del combate que empezó á las 11½ atacando desesperadamente con el primer cuerpo del ejército enemigo y con su gritería acostumbrada la casa de campo de la derecha.

Las tropas de Nassau tuvieron que abandonar su puesto; pero el enemigo encontró tal resistencia en la casa, que aunque la rodeó por tres lados, y la atacó con el mayor encarnizamiento, tuvo que desistir de su empresa, dejando las inmediaciones de ella cubiertas de cadáveres y heridos. Lord Wellington envió nuevas tropas Ynglesas que recuperaron el bosque y jardin, y el combate cesó por el pronto de este lado.

Entonces abrió el enemigo un fuego espantoso de artillería de mas de 200 piezas, y á su abrigo hizo Bonaparte un ataque general desde el centro á la derecha con caballería é infantería en tanto número, que se necesitó toda la sabiduría del Lord para colocar sus tropas, y de toda la buena calidad de estas para resistirlo.

El General Picton, que se hallaba con su division en el camino de Bruselas á Charleroi, avanzó á la bayoneta para recibirlos; pero tuvo la desgracia de ser muerto en el momento en que el enemigo atemorizado de la actitud de esta division, hacia una descarga y se ponía en huida.

La Guardia de Corps Ynglesa cargó entonces con la mayor bazarria, y los regimientos Franceses 49 y 105 perdieron sus respectivas águilas y como 2 ó 3 mil prisioneros. Una columna de caballería, á cuya cabeza se hallaban los coraceros, se presentó para cargar la guardia, y salvar de este modo la infantería;

pero esta los recibió con el mayor valor, y se trabó entonces el combate mas sangriento que pueda verificarse en esta arma.

Los coraceros Franceses fueron batidos completamente á pesar de sus corazas por gentes que no las tenían, y perdieron una de sus águilas en esta pelea, que tomó el regimiento de caballería pesada Ynglesa llamados los reales.

En este tiempo llegó el aviso de que el cuerpo Prusiano de Bulow habia llegado á St. Lambert, y que el Príncipe Blucher con el otro á las órdenes del General Thielman, se avanzaba á toda prisa á tomar parte en el combate, dejando en Wavre los otros dos que tanto habian sufrido en la batalla del 16 en Fleurus. La llegada de estas tropas era tanto mas necesaria, cuanto que el enemigo tenia fuerzas mas que triplicadas, y que nuestra pérdida era horrorosa en un combate tan desigual desde las 11½ de la mañana hasta las 5 de la tarde.

Bonaparte, que no los creia tan cerca, y que habia contado con destruir á Lord Wellington antes de su llegada, conoció que habia perdido infructuosamente mas de 5 horas, y que en la posicion crítica en que iba á verse no le quedaba otro recurso que atacar desesperadamente la parte débil de la posicion Ynglesa, y ver el modo de batir al Duque antes de que su derecha fuese envuelta y atacada por los Prusianos.

Desde entonces todo fué una repeticion de ataque sobre ataque de caballería é infantería sostenidos de mas de 300 piezas de artillería que desgraciadamente hicieron un estrago espantoso en nuestra línea y mataron é hirieron los oficiales, artilleros y caballos de la parte mas débil de la posicion.

El enemigo que conoció esta fatalidad, hizo cargar toda la caballería de su guardia que se apoderó de las piezas, habiendo sido imposible el retirarlas; pero el Duque que se hallaba en aquel punto, las cargó con 3 batallones Yngleses y 3 de Brunswick, y les obligó á abandonarlas al momento sin que nosotros pudieramos retirarlas por falta de caballos, ni ellos se atreviesen á avanzar á recobrarlas.

Por fin, á cosa de las siete de la noche Bonaparte trató de hacer el último esfuerzo, y poniéndose á la cabeza de su guardia atacó él mismo el punto indicado de la posicion Ynglesa con tal vigor, que arrolló las tropas de Brunswick que

ocupaban parte de él, y tuvo por un momento indecisa y aun mas que dudosa la victoria.

El Duque, que conoció tan crítica situacion, habló á las tropas de Brunswick con el ascendiente que tiene todo hombre grande, las hizo volver á la carga, y poniéndose á la cabeza de ellas restableció nuevamente el combate, esponiéndose á toda clase de riesgos personales. Felizmente en este momento percibió el fuego del Mariscal Blucher, que atacaba con su vigor acostumbrado la derecha enemiga; y viendo el momento de dar un golpe decisivo, se puso á la cabeza de las guardias de infantería Ynglesa, les dijo cuatro palabras que fueron contestadas por un hurrah general, y guiándolos el mismo Duque con el sombrero, marcharon á la bayoneta á medirse cuerpo á cuerpo con la guardia Ymperial.

Pero esta se puso en retirada, que pronto se convirtió en una huida completa, y en la mayor derrota que jamas han presenciado los militares. Columnas enteras arrojando las armas y cartucheras para escapar mejor, dejaban señalado el sitio de su formacion; solo en el cual nos apoderamos de 150 piezas de artilleria. La derrota de Vitoria no es comparable con esta, y solo se le parece en que en ambas ocasiones han perdido todo el tren y pertrechos del ejército, así como todos sus equipages.

El Duque siguió el alcance hasta cerca de Genappe donde halló al respetable Blucher, y ambos se abrazaron del modo mas cordial en el camino real de Charleroi; pero viéndose en el mismo punto que los Prusianos y que su ejército necesitaba de descanso despues de lucha semejante, dejó á Blucher el cuidado de perseguirlos, y este juró no dejarles un momento de reposo. Así lo va ejecutando, y ayer habia llegado al medio dia á Charleroi, de donde pensaba salir al anocheecer para seguir el alcance.

Esto es en resúmen lo que ha pasado en este dia memorable, y las consecuencias de este suceso son demasiado conocidas para que yo me detenga á detallarlas. Bonaparte mal afirmado en su trono usurpado, sin dinero y sin tropas con que reclutar su ejército, ha recibido un golpe tan mortal que segun los prisioneros, no le queda mas recurso que cortarse el cuello.

Por este motivo dicen ellos que jamas lo han visto esponer

tanto su persona, y que parecia que buscaba la muerte para no sobrevivir á una derrota de consecuencias para él tan funestas.

Dige á V. E. con fecha del 16 que su maniobra me parecia atrevida delante de generales como Blucher y el Duque: el suceso ha justificado plenamente mi prediccion. Así creo que el haberla ejecutado no ha provenido sinó de su desesperacion al ver las fuerzas enormes que iban á atacarlo por todos lados de la Francia, y con el objeto de dar uno de sus golpes acostumbrados antes de la llegada de los Rusos y Austriacos.

Su reputacion militar se perdió para siempre; y en esta ocasion que no hay traicion de aliados ni puentes volados antes de tiempo á quienes echar la culpa, toda la vergüenza va á recaer sobre la superioridad numérica, superioridad de artilleros todo estaba en su favor, y el haber sido el acometedor prueba bien que tenia medios suficientes para ejecutarlo.

Por fin, este talisman, que como un hechizo tenia encantados á los militares franceses se disipó en esta ocasion. Bonaparte ha perdido para siempre la reputacion de invencible, que en adelante la conservará un hombre honrado, que lejos de emplear este título glorioso en turbar y esclavizar la Europa, lo convertirá en un instrumento de su felicidad, y en procurarle la paz de que tanto necesita.

La pérdida de los Ingleses es horrorosa, y de los que se hallaron al lado del Duque solo él y yo salimos intactos en las personas y caballos. Los demas todos han sido muertos, heridos ó han perdido uno ó mas caballos.

El Duque de Brunswick fué muerto el 16, y el Príncipe de Orange y su primo el Príncipe de Nassau, edecan del Lord recibieron dos balazos. El Príncipe de Orange se distinguió extremadísimamente, pero por desgracia aunque la herida no es peligrosa privará al ejército de la importancia de sus servicios por mucho tiempo, y acaso perderá el uso del brazo izquierdo. El Lord Paget, general de la caballería, recibió al fin del combate una herida, que hizo necesaria la amputacion de su pierna derecha, pérdida irreparable, porque difícilmente se encontrará un gefe que conduzca la caballería con el valor y ciencia que él.

El Duque no ha podido contener sus lágrimas al ver tantos dignos y valientes hombres muertos, y la pérdida de tantos amigos y compañeros fieles, y solo la importancia del triunfo puede hacer menos sensible pérdida tan considerable.

Esta mañana ha salido para Nivelles, y mañana saldrá para Mons, de donde entrará en Francia al momento. La ocasion no puede ser mejor. No quiero concluir este oficio sin decir á V. E. para noticia de S. M., que el Capitan D. Nicolas de Mimussir, del regimiento de tiradores de Doyle, de quien tengo hablado á V. E. anteriormente, así como de su destino en este ejército, se portó ayer con el mayor valor y bizarría, habiendo sido herido cuando arrojadas las tropas de Nassau del jardin las reunió é hizo volver á su puesto; que durante el combate tuvo otro caballo herido, y que por su conducta anterior y por la que ha observado en este dia, es digno de que S. M. le dé una prueba de su satisfaccion. Este oficial es bien conocido en la Secretaría de Guerra, y lo es tambien del General Don J. de Zayas que ha hecho mucho aprecio de su mérito. Dios guarde á V. E. muchos años. Bruselas, 20 de Junio de 1815. Exmo.

Sr. B. L. M. de V. E. S. M. A. S. Miguel de Alava. Exmo.
Sr. Don Pedro Cevallos.

P. D. No puedo decir el número de prisioneros, porque á cada paso van llegando en gran porcion. Hay muchos generales prisioneros, entre los cuales se cuentan el Conde de Loban, edecan de Bonaparte, y Cambrone, que le acompañó á la Isla de Elba.

Armee-Bericht der preussischen Armee vom Nieder-Rhein.

Es war am 15ten Juny als Napoleon die Feindseligkeiten begann, nachdem er am 14ten 5 Armee-Corps und die Garden zwischen Maubeuge und Beaumont zusammengezogen hatte. Die Konzentrationspunkte der 4 preussischen Armee-Corps waren Fleurus, Namur, Cinay und Hannut, und so gelegen, dass die Armee auf einem dieser Punkte in 24 Stunden versammelt seyn konnte.

Napoleon drang am 15ten über Thuin auf beyden Seiten der Sambre gegen Charleroy vor. Der General Ziethen hatte das 1ste Armee-Corps bey Fleurus zusammengezogen, und bestand an dem Tage ein heftiges Gefecht mit dem Feinde, der, nachdem er Charleroy genommen, gegen Fleurus marschirte. General Ziethen behauptete seine Stellung bey Fleurus. Der Feldmarschall Blücher war gesonnen dem Feinde so schnell wie möglich eine grosse Schlacht zu liefern; die 3 übrigen preussischen Armee-Corps waren demzufolge gegen Sombref (1½ Stunde von Fleurus) in Marsch gesetzt worden, wo das 2te und dritte den 15ten und das 4te den 16ten eintreffen musste. Lord Wellington hatte seine Armee den 15ten bey Ath und Nivelles zusammengezogen, und war auf diese Art im Stande, im Fall es am 16ten zur Schlacht kommen sollte, den Feldmarschall zu unterstützen.

Schlacht vom 16ten Juny bey Ligny.

Die preussische Armee stand auf den Höhen zwischen Brie und Sombref, und über Sombref hinaus, die Dörfer Ligny und St. Amand in der Front stark besetzt haltend. Drey Armee-Corps waren indess nur versammelt; das 4te, welches zwischen Lüttich und Hannut gestanden hatte, war in seiner Bewegung durch allerley Zufälligkeiten etwas verspätet worden, und nicht herangekommen. Nichts destoweniger entschloss sich der Feldmarschall zu schlagen, da Lord Wellington bereits eine starke Abtheilung seines Heeres, so wie alle seine bey Brüssel stehenden Reserven, ihm zur Unterstützung in Marsch gesetzt hatte, und das 4te Armee-Corps erwartet wurde.

Um 3 Uhr Nachmittags begann die Schlacht. Der Feind entwickelte über 130,000 Mann. 80,000 Man war das preus-

sische Heer stark. Das Dorf St. Amand ward zuerst vom Feinde angegriffen, und nach heftiger Gegenwehr genommen. Hierauf wandte sich der Feind gegen Ligny. Ligny ist ein sehr grosses massiv gebautes Dorf längs des Ligny Bachs. Hier nun begann ein Kampf, der unter die hartnäckigsten gehört, die je gekämpft worden sind. Sonst werden Dörfer genommen und wieder genommen, hier aber dauerte das Gefecht 5 Stunden lang im Dorfe selbst, und bewegte sich nur durch geringe Räume vor- oder rückwärts. Unaufhörlich rückten von beyden Seiten frische Truppen ins Gefecht. Jeder hatte hinter derjenigen Abtheilung des Dorfes, die von ihm besetzt war, grosse Massen Infanterie aufgestellt, die das Gefecht ununterbrochen nährten, und ihrerseits wieder unaufhörlich von rückwärts her ergänzt wurden, und von den diess- und jenseits liegenden Höhen herab war das Feuer von beynahe zweyhundert Geschützen beyder Armeen gegen das Dorf gerichtet, das an vielen Orten zugleich in Brand gerathen war. Nach und nach hatte sich das Gefecht längs der ganzen Stellung ausgedehnt, denn auch gegen das 3te Armee-Corps bey Sombref hatte der Feind viele Truppen entwickelt; bey Ligny indess lag die Entscheidung. Manches versprach den preussischen Waffen eine günstige Wendung, denn ein Theil des Dorfes St. Amand war von einem Bataillon unter persönlicher Anführung des Feldmarschalls den Franzosen wieder entrissen, und eine Höhe wieder genommen worden, die nach dem Verluste von St. Amand unsererseits verlassen worden war. Bey Ligny jedoch stand die Schlacht mit gleicher Wuth. Jetzt war der Augenblick, wo das Erscheinen der Engländer, oder die Ankunft des 4ten Armee-Corps entschieden haben würde; denn kam das 4te Armee-Corps an, so hätte der Feldmarschall unverzüglich einen Angriff mit dem rechten Flügel gemacht, der seinen Erfolg nicht verfehlt haben würde. Doch es ging die Nachricht ein, dass die zu unserer Unterstützung bestimmte Abtheilung des englischen Heeres selbst von einem französischen Armee-Corps heftig angegriffen worden sey, und sich nur mit Anstrengung in seiner Stellung bey Quatre Bras behauptet habe; das 4te Armee-Corps blieb ebenfalls aus, und so waren wir denn angewiesen der grossen Uebermacht allein zu widerstehen. Es war bereits weit in der Dämmerung, und immer noch wüthete die Schlacht bey Ligny

gleich mörderisch und gleich unentschieden fort. Es wuchs die Noth unter vergeblichem Sehnen nach Hülfe. Alle Truppenabtheilungen waren im Gefecht, oder hatten gefochten, und keine frischen Truppen waren mehr zur Hand. Plötzlich griff eine Abtheilung feindlicher Infanterie, die unter Begünstigung der Dämmerung sich auf der einen Seite um das Dorf herumgeschlichen hatte, während auf der andern einige Kürassier-Regimenter durchbrachen, unsere hinter dem Dorfe aufgestellten Massen im Rücken an. Diese Ueberraschung des Feindes entschied, doch ward sie nur dann erst entscheidend, als unsere Cavallerie, die hinter dem Dorfe auf den Höhen aufgestellt war, in wiederholten Angriffen von der feindlichen Cavallerie zurückgeschlagen worden war.

Unsere hinter Ligny aufgestellten Massen Infanterie, wenn schon sie sich zum Rückzuge genöthigt sah, liess sich jedoch durch die Ueberraschung des Feindes in der Dunkelheit, die dem Menschen jede Gefahr vergrössert, so wie dadurch, dass sie von allen Seiten umringt war, nicht irre machen. In Massen gestellt schlug sie alle Cavallerie-Angriffe kaltblütig ab, und zog sich mit Ruhe auf die Höhen zurück, von wo der weitere Marsch gegen Tilly langsam fortgesetzt wurde. Durch das plötzliche Vorbrechen der feindlichen Cavallerie hatten mehrere unserer Geschütze im schnellen Abziehen Richtungen eingeschlagen, wo sie in l'efileen geriethen, in welchen sie sich verfuhrten. Fünfzehn Stück fielen auf diese Art dem Feinde in die Hände. Eine Viertelmeile weit vom Schlachtfelde stellte sich die Armee wieder auf; der Feind wagte nicht zu folgen. Das Dorf Brie blieb die Nacht über noch von uns besetzt, eben so Sombréf, wo der General Thielmann mit dem dritten Armee-Corps gefochten hatte, und sich mit anbrechendem Tage langsam nach Gembloux zurückzog, wo das 4te Armee-Corps unter dem General Bülow in der Nacht eingetroffen war. Das erste und zweyte Corps gingen am andern Morgen hinter das Defilee von Mont St. Guibert. Unser Verlust an Todten und Verwundeten war gross, an Gefangenen hatten wir nichts als einen Theil unserer Berwundeten Verloren.

Wenn schon die Schlacht verloren war, so war sie es doch so ehrenvoll wie möglich. Unsere Truppen hatten mit einer Tapferkeit gefochten, die nichts zu wünschen übrig liess; darum

war auch bey Niemand der Muth gebeugt, denn die Zuversicht auf die eigne Kraft war nicht erschüttert worden. An diesem Tage schwebte der Feldmarschall in grosser Gefahr. Ein Cavallerie-Angriff, wo er sich selbst an der Spitze befand, war misslungen. Als die feindliche Cavallerie schnell verfolgte, durchbohrte ein Schuss das Pferd des Feldmarschalls. Der Schuss hemmte jedoch nicht des Pferdes Lauf. Der Schmerz trieb es vielmehr immer heftiger zu konvulsivischen Sprüngen an, bis es plötzlich in vollem Rennen todt zu Boden stürzte. Der Feldmarschall lag, vom gewaltsamen Sturze betäubt, unter dem todtten Pferde. Die feindlichen Kürassiere jagten in der Verfolgung heran; unsere letzten Reiter waren schon beym Feldmarschal, vorüber; nur ein Adjutant war bey ihm vom Pferde abgesprungen stand er neben ihm, sein Schicksal zu theilen entschlossen. Die Noth war gross, doch der Himmel wachte über uns. Die Feinde jagten in wilder Eile vorüber ohne den Feldmarschall zu bemerken, und eben so jagten sie noch einmal bey ihm vorbey, als die Unsrigen sie wieder zurück geworfen hatten. Jetzt erst brachte man mit Mühe den Feldmarschall unter dem todtten Pferde hervor, wo er so dann ein Dragonerpferd bestieg.

Am 17ten Juny Abends hatte sich die preussische Armee bey Wavre enger zusammengezogen. Napoleon setzte sich an dem Tage gegen Lord Wellington auf der grossen Strasse von Charleroy nach Brüssel in Bewegung. Bey Quatre Bras bestand eine Abtheilung der englischen Armee ein heftiges Gefecht mit dem Feinde. Lord Wellington hatte auf der Brüsseler Strasse eine Stellung genommen mit dem rechten Flügel gegen Braine la Leud, mit der Mitte bey Mont St. Jean, und mit dem linken Flügel gegen la Haye. In dieser Stellung, schrieb Lord Wellington an den Feldmarschall, sey er Willens die Schlacht anzunehmen, wenn der Feldmarschall ihn mit zwey Armee-Corps unterstützen wollte. Der Feldmarschall versprach mit der ganzen Armee zu kommen, und schlug selbst vor, im Fall Napoleon nicht angriffe, ihn am andern Tage mit gesammter Kraft anzugreifen. Hiervon mag man ermessen, wie wenig die Schlacht vom 16ten die preussische Armee zerrüttet, und ihre moralische Kraft geschwächt hatte. So ward die Schlacht beschlossen.

Schlacht von 18ten.

Mit Tages-Anbruch brach die preussische Armee auf; das vierte und das zweyte Armee-Corps wurden über St. Lambert hinaus in Marsch gesetzt, wo sie sich in dem Walde vor Friche-mont verdeckt aufstellen sollten, um im günstigen Augenblicke in des Feindes Rücken vorzubrechen. Das erste Armee-Corps erhielt seine Richtung über Ohain in des Feindes rechte Flanke; das dritte Armee-Corps sollte zur Unterstützung langsam folgen. Um 10 Uhr Vormittags begann die Schlacht. Die britische Armee stand auf den Höhen von Mont St. Jean, die Französische auf den Höhen vorwärts Planchenoit, die englische Armee war gegen 80,000 Mann stark, die feindliche zählte über 130,000.—Es dauerte nicht lange, so war die Schlacht allgemein auf der ganzen Linie. Napoleon schien die Absicht zu haben den englischen linken Flügel und das Centrum zu werfen, und so die Trennung der englischen von der preussischen Armee, die er gegen Mastricht im Rückzuge glaubte, zu vollenden. Er hatte desswegen den grössten Theil seiner Reserven im Centrum gegen seinen rechten Flügel aufgestellt, und bestürmte hier die Engländer mit unglaublicher Heftigkeit. Die britische Armee focht unübertrefflich, an der Tapferkeit der Schotten scheiterten die wiederholten Angriffe der alten Garden, und bey jedem Zusammentreffen wurde die französische Cavallerie von der englischen geworfen und zerstreut. Doch Napoleons Uebermacht war zu gross, er drückte fort und fort mit gewaltigen Massen gegen die Engländer, und so standhaft auch diese sich noch immer in ihrer Stellung behaupteten, so mussten so grosse Anstrengungen doch ihre Grenze endlich erreichen.

Es war halb 5 Uhr Nachmittags. Das sehr schwierige Defilee von St. Lambert hatte den Marsch der preussischen Colonnen beträchtlich aufgehalten, so, dass vom vierten Armee-Corps erst zwey Brigaden in ihrer verdeckten Aufstellung angekommen waren. Der Augenblick der Entscheidung war eingetreten und keine Zeit zu verlieren. Die preussischen Feldherrn liessen den Augenblick nicht entschlüpfen; sie beschlossen ungesäumt den Angriff mit dem, was zur Hand war, und so brach General Bülow mit zwey Brigaden und einem Corps Cavallerie plötzlich vor, gerade im Rücken des feindlichen rechten Flügels.

Der Feind verlor die Besonnenheit nicht. Er wandte auf der Stelle seine Reserven gegen uns, und es begann ein mörderischer Kampf. Das Gefecht stand lange Zeit, und ward mit gleicher Heftigkeit gegen Engländer fortgesetzt.

Ungefähr um 6 Uhr Ubends traf die Nachricht ein, dass General Thielmann mit dem dritten Armee-Corps bey Wavre von einem beträchtlichen feindlichen Corps angegriffen sey, und dass man sich bereits um den Besitz der Stadt schlage. Der Feldmarschall liess sich jedoch hierdurch nicht erschüttern; vor ihm lag die Entscheidung des Tages, und nicht anderswo; nur ein gleich heftiger mit immer frischen Truppen fortgesetzter Kampf konnte allein den Sieg gewinnen, und wenn hier Sieg gewonnen ward, so liess sich jeder Nachtheil bey Wavre leicht verschmerzen. Alle Colonnen blieben demnach in Marsch. Es war halb 8 Uhr, und noch stand die Schlacht; das ganze vierte Armee-Corps und ein Theil des zweyten unter dem General Pirch waren nach und nach angekommen. Die Franzosen fochten wie Verzweifelte; allmählig bemerkte man jedoch schon Unsicherheit in ihren Bewegungen, und sah wie mehreres Geschütz schon abgefahren ward. In diesem Augenblick erschienen die ersten Colonnen des Armee-Corps vom General Ziethen auf ihrem Angriffspunkte beym Dorfe Smouhen in des Feindes rechter Flanke, und schritten auch sogleich frisch ans Werk. Jetzt war's um den Feind geschehen. Von drey Seiten ward sein rechter Flügel bestürmt; er wich; im Sturmschritt und unter Trommelschlag gings von allen Seiten auf ihn ein, indem zugleich die ganze brittische Linie sich vorwärts in Bewegung setze.

Einen besonders schönen Augenblick gewährte die Angriffsseite des preussischen Heeres. Das Terrain war hier terrassenartig gebildet, so das mehrere Stufen Geschützfeuer übereinander entwickelt werden konnten, zwischen denen die Truppen Brigadenweis in der schönsten Ordnung in die Elene hinabstiegen, während aus dem hinten auf der Höhe liegenden Walde immer neue Massen sich entfalteten. Mit dem Rückzuge des Feindes ging es noch so lange erträglich, bis das Dorf Planchenoit in seinem Rücken, das die Gardes vertheidigten, nach mehreren abgeschlagenen Angriffen und vielem Blutvergiessen endlich mit Sturm genommen war. Nun wurde aus dem Rückzuge

eine Flucht, die bald das ganze französische Heer ergriff, und immer wilder und wilder alles mit sich fort riss. Es war 9½ Uhr. Der Feldmarschall versammelte jetzt die höheren Officiere, und befahl, dass der letzte Hauch von Mensch und Pferd zur Verfolgung aufgeboden werden sollte. Die Spitze der Armee beschleunigte ihre Schritte. Rastlos verfolgt gerieth das französische Heer bald in eine völlige Auflösung. Die Chaussee sah wie ein grosser Schiffbruch aus. Sie war mit unzähligen Geschützen, Pulverwagen, Fahrzeugen, Gewehren, und Trümmern aller Art wie besäet, aus mehr als 9 Bivouaks wurden diejenigen, die sich einige Ruhe hatten gönnen wollen, und keine so schnelle Verfolgung erwartet hatten, vertrieben; in einigen Dörfern versuchten sie zu widerstehen, doch, so wie sie die Trommeln und Flügelhörner hörten, flohen sie, oder warfen sich in die Häuser, wo sie niedergemacht oder gefangen wurden. Der Mond schien hell und begünstigte ungemein die Verfolgung. Der ganze Marsch war ein stetes Aufstöbern des Feindes in den Dörfern und Getreidefeldern.

In Jenappe hatte sich der Feind mit Kanonen, umgeworfenen Munitionswagen und Fahrzeugen verbarrikadirt; als wir uns naherten, hörten wir plötzlich ein Lärmen und Fahren im Orte, und erhielten zugleich vom Eingange her ein starkes Gewehrfeuer; einige Kanonenschüsse, ein Hurrah, und die Stadt war unser. Hier ward unter vielen andren Equipagen Napoleons Wagen genommen, den er so eben erst verlassen, um sich zu Pferde zu werfen, und in welchem er in der Eil seinen Degen zurückgelassen und beym Herausspringen seinen Hut eingebüsst hatte. So ging es bis zu Anbruch des Tages rastlos fort. Im wildesten Durcheinander haben kaum 40,000 Mann als Rest der ganzen Armee, zum Theil ohne Gewehre, sich durch Charleroy gerettet mit nur 27 Geschützen seiner ganzen zahlreichen Artillerie.

Bis weit hinter seine Festungen ist der Feind geflohen, der einzige Schutz seiner Gränzen, die jetzt unaufhaltsam von unseren Armeen überschritten werden.

Um 3 Uhr Nachmittags hatte Napoleon einen Courier nach Paris vom Schlachtfelde mit der Nachricht abgefertigt, dass der Sieg nicht mehr zweifelhaft sey; einige Stunden später hatte er keine Armee mehr. Eine genaue Kenntniss des feindlichen

Verlustes hat man noch nicht; es ist genug, wenn man weiss, dass zwey Drittel der Armee erschlagen, verwundet oder, gefangen worden, unter andern die Generale Mouton, Duhesme und Compans, und dass bis jetzt schon gegen 300 Geschütze und über 500 Pulverwagen in unsern Händen sind.

Selten ist solch ein vollkommener Sieg erfochten worden, und beyspiellos gewiss ist es, dass eine Armee den zweyten Tag nach einer verlornen Schlacht einen solchen Kampf unternommen und so glänzend bestanden hat. Ehre dem Heere, in welchem solche Standhaftigkeit und so frommer Muth sich darthun!

In Mittelpunkt der französischen Stellung, ganz auf der Höhe liegt eine Meyerey, la Belle Alliance genannt; wie ein Fanal rings umher sichtbar war der Marsch aller preussischen Colonnen dorthin gerichtet. Auf dieser Stelle befand sich Napoleon während der Schlacht; von hier aus gab er seine Befehle, von hier aus wollte er den Sieg erringen, und hier entschied sich seine Niederlage; hier endlich trafen in der Dunkelheit durch eine anmuthige Gunst des Zufalls der Feldmarschall und Lord Wellington zusammen, und begrüßten sich gegenseitig Als Sieger.

Zum Andenken des zwischen der brittischen und preussischen nation jetzt bestehenden von der Natur schon gebotenen Bündnisses, der Vereinigung der heyden Armeen, und der wechselseitigen Zutraulichkeit der beyden Feldherrn, befahl der Feldmarschall, dass diese Schlacht die Schlacht von belle Alliance genannt werden sollte.

Hauptquartier, Merbes le Chateau, den 20sten Juny 1815.

Auf Befehl des Feldmarschalls Fürsten BLUCHER,

Der General

Graf von GNEISENAU.

Auszug aus einem Berichte des General-Lieutenant's Carl v. Alten an Se Königlichen Hoheit, den Herrn Feldmarschall und General-Gouverneur, Herzog von Cambridge, datirt Brüssel den 20sten June 1815, und überbracht durch den Lieutenant und Ober-Adjutant Wiegemann.

Am 15ten Jun. Abends brachen die Truppen aus den verschiedenen sehr zerstreuten Cantonnements auf. Der Herzog von Wellington zog die in der Gegend von Brüssel befindlichen Truppen bey Genappe zusammen. Der Erbprinz von Oranien, unter dessen Befehlen meine division stand, rückte bis Quatre Bras, wo sich die Strassen von Mons nach Namur und von Brüssel nach Charleroi durchkreuzen, vor. Die Franzosen hatten ihre Armee getheilt, und griffen die Preussen, den Herzog von Wellington und unser Corps zugleich an. Der Erbprinz stellte uns zwischen Quatre Bras und Sart à Maveline auf, so dass der rechte Flügel das erstere, und der linke das letztere Dorf besetzt hatte. Der Aufmarsch geschah unter dem heftigsten Canonenfeur des Feindes. Ein Gehölz rechts von Quatre Bras wurde abwechselnd von unserer Seite und vom Feinde genommen. Die Kanonade von beiden Seiten ward sehr lebhaft. Der Feind versuchte mehrere Male unsern linken Flügel zu forceiren; ich schickte das Feld bataillon Lüneburg ab, um ihn aus dem vorliegenden Dorfe Pierremont zu vertreiben. Der Oberst-lieutenant von Klenke führte diesen Auftrag mit vieler Entschlossenheit aus, nahm das Dorf, und behauptete es gegen die wiederholten Angriffe des Feindes. Hierauf ging die feindliche Infanterie in mehreren Colonnen vor, gegen welche ich die Feld-bataillon Grubenhagen, Osnabrück und Bremen detaschirte. Die Truppen trieben mit Hülfe der Artillerie der Konigl. Deutschen Legion unter dem Hauptmann Cleves den Feind zurück. Am rechten Flügel wagte es die feindliche Cavallerie mehrere male anzugreifen, allein die Standhaftigkeit der Truppen verstattete ihr nicht durchzudringen. Bey dieser Gelegenheit zeichnete sich besonders das Landwehr-Bataillon Lüneburg unter dem Commando des Oberst-lieutenant von Ramdohr aus. Dieser liesz die feindliche Cavallerie auf 80 Schritte herankommen, gab ihr dann eine Salbe, wodurch sie

mit groszem Verlust zurückgetrieben ward. Wir waren so glücklich unsere Position zu behaupten; allein da die Preussische Armee auf unserm linken Flügel einen ziemlich bedeutenden Echec erlitten hatte, muszten wir uns am 17ten auf Genappe Zurück ziehen, wohin meine Division die Arrière garde machte. Da aber der Feind am Nachmittage in sehr groszer Anzahl erschien, gingen wir nach Mont St. Jean auf der Strasse nach Brüssel zurück. Hier hatte sich die ganze Armee des Herzogs von Wellington versammelt, und nahm eine Position auf den Höhen vor diesem Dorfe, so dasz der linke Flügel an das Dorf Frichemont, und die rechte an die chaussée von Brüssel nach Nivelles gelehnt war. Die Chaussée von Genappe nach Brüssel durchschnitt das Centrum der Armee, welches meine Division ausmachte. Die dicht vor dem linken Flügel meiner Division liegende Ferme la Haye Sainte liesz ich durch das leichte Bataillon der königlich deutschen Legion unter dem Major Baring besetzen. In den vor dem rechten Flügel liegenden Pachthof Hougomont und in das kleine Holz vor demselben wurde eine Compagnie hannöverscher Träger und 2 leichte Compagnien engl. Garden geworfen.

Die Infanterie des Armee Corps Sr. konigl. Hoheit des Prinzen von Oranien, wozu meine Division gehörte, stand in Colonnen en echiquier auf $\frac{1}{4}$ Distanz aufmarschirt, und zwar 2 und 2 Bataillons neben einander, das rechte links, und das linke rechts abmarschirt, sodasz man gleich deployiren oder Quarrées formiren konnte. Zwischen den Colonnen war hinlängliche Distanz zum Durchmarsch der hinter den Quarrées stehenden Cavallerie und Artillerie. Das Corps des General Lord Hill war in Reserve bey Braine la Leud aufgestellt, und deckte zugleich die Chaussée von Nivelles nach Brüssel. Jenseits dieser Chaussée stand einige Cavallerie, die Bewegung des Feindes zu bewachen. Um 1 Uhr schickte der Feind seine Tirailleurs gegen das Holz vor unserm rechten Flügel woselbst ein lebhaftes Gefecht entstand. Dieser Posten war für uns von groszer Wichtigkeit weil der Feind durch dessen Besitz eine Höhe gewann die unsere rechte Flanke bedrohte. Nach und nach liesz er starke Colonnen Infanterie, durch Artillerie unterstützt, auf diesen Posten vorrücken, zu dessen

Behauptung die Britischen Garden aufgestellt waren, die ihn mit unerschrockener Ausdauer vertheidigten.

Die Schlacht ward auf der ganzen Linie allgemein. Der Feind liesz eine zahlreiche Artillerie gegen uns aufführen. Unter dem Schutz derselben drang eine Colonne von mehreren Tausend Mann gerade auf die Chaussée von Genappe vor, die jedoch durch die beiden leichten und das 8te Linien Bataillon der königl deutschen Legion und das Feldbataillon Lüneburg zurückgeworfen wurde. Hinter dieser Colonne rückte die feindliche Cavallerie so unaufhaltsam vor, dasz sie die en debandade agirende Infanterie über den haufen warf, und auf den Berg Zwischen die en Echiquier stehenden Quarrées drang. Die Truppen blieben unerschütterlich bis die Englische Cavallerie vor drang, und den Feind zurückwarf; die dabei am meisten exponierten Quarrées wurden von dem Oberstlieutenant von Wurmb und Major v. Schkopp commandirt. Der Oberstlieutenant v. Langrehr war bereits verwundet zurückgebracht. Jetzt wurde das Artillerie feur des Feindes immer heftiger, und nahm von beiden Seiten in einem solchen Grade zu, wie es vielleicht wenige der ältesten Krieger erlebt haben. Die Angriffe der feindlichen Infanterie und Cavallerie wurden mehrere Male und von verschiedenen Seiten wiederholt. Bonaparte wollte durchaus das centrum durchbrechen, und sich so den Weg nach Brüssel bahnen. Eine Colonne wurde von dem Oberst von Ompteda, der sich an die Spitze seines Bataillons setzte, zurückgeworfen. Indess rückte der Feind immer näher, und mit immer frischen Truppen auf. Seine Artillerie beschoss unsere Quarrées auf 150 Schritt mit Kartätschen. Keines wich; die Todten wurden zur Seite geschoben und die Reihen wieder geschlossen. Mehrere rückten gegen die feindliche Cavallerie vor und nöthigten selbige durch ihr heftiges feur zum Rückzuge. Zuletzt muszten einige derselben, welche fast ganz zusammengeschmolzen waren, weichen; jedoch gingen sie mit Ordnung Zurück, und gleich wieder vor, als sie dazu beordert wurden. Der Herzag von Wellington war stets Augenzeuge. Dieser Held befand sich immer da wo die gröszte Gefahr war, und der Prinz von Oranien zeigte einen Muth, der seiner groszen Vorfahren würdig ist. Es wur sein Corps gegen welches die Hauptmacht des Feindes gerichtet war, die Bonaparte in Person anführte.

In diesem kritischen Augenblicke griff der konigl. preussische General von Bülow, der mit 30,000 Mann zur Unterstützung herbeigeeilt war, den Feind in seiner Flanke an. Jetzt war der Sieg unser; der Feind floh nach allen Seiten, und liesz den grössten Theil seiner Artillerie zurück. Nahe an 200 Kanonen und mehrere Adler sind gewonnen.

Die Zahl der eingebrachten Gefangenen lässt sich nicht genau angeben; sie erstreckt sich auf viele Tausende.

Unsere Armée ist bis Binseh, und die der Preussen bis nach Charleroi vorgerückt.

Diese beyden Tage haben uns zwar auch viel gekostet, und mit innigem Bedauern musz ich Eur. Königl. Hoheit melden, dasz der gröszeste Theil unserer aus gezeichnetsten Officiren geblieben ist. Unter diese rechne ich besonders die Obersten von Ompteda und Du Plat, die Oberstlieutenants von Wurmb und von Langrehr. Indesz unser Trost ist, dasz diese Männer ihr Grab mit Ruhm bedeckt, und die Hanoveraner sich den Ruf der Tapfern erworben haben: Als Augenzeuge kann ich zwar nur von den zu meiner Division gehörenden Feldbataillons Bremen, Lüneburg Verden, Grubenhagen und Herzog von York ertheilen; und ihnen das Zeugniß geben dasz sie sich würdig gemacht haben in den Annalen unseres Militärs genannt zu werden; indess ist mir von einigen Brigadiers der Landwehr Brigaden, welche im Gefecht gewesen sind, ein sehr vortheilhafter Bericht zugegangen. Oberst Halkett rühmt besonders das Bataillon Osnabrück. Von unsrer Kavallerie war nur das Regiment Herzog von Cumberland in der Schlacht gegenwärtig, ist aber zum Angriffe nicht vor gewesen. Es war einige Zeit dem Kannonenfeuer sehr aus gesetzt, wodurch es bedeutend verlohren hat.

Wenn gleich jeder Officier und Soldat den ich zu beobachten Gelegenheit hatte seine Pflicht erfüllt hat, so fühle ich mich doch verbunden, einige derselben, die sich in diesen heissen Tagen ganz vorzüglich ausgezeichnet haben, besonders zu bemerken, und ich darf hoffen, dasz sie Eur. Königl.-Hoheit, da Sie so geneigt sind, Verdienste zu belohnen, ihnen gern Merkmale Ihrer Zufriedenheit und Ihres Beifalls, welches der höchste Sporn für selbige ist, geben werden.

Der General-Major Graf von Kielmansegge hat seiner Brigade durch Muth und Unerschrockenheit das höchste Beispiel gegeben, und mich nach allen Kräften stets unterstützt.

Das Benehmen der Oberst-lieutenants v. Klenke, v. Wurmb und v. Langrehr, der Majore v. Klopp, v. Bülow und v. Stockhausen verdienen die höchste Achtung. Auch den Major Graf Münster glaube ich nach den erhaltenen Bericht des Obersten Halkett mit Recht Eur. Königl. Hoheit empfehlen zu können. Er focht mit dem Londwehr Bataillon Osnabrück gegen Napoleons garden, und warf sie.

Nicht minder dankbar bin ich denen Officiers meines Stabes, und namentlich dem Obersten v. Berger, als Chef des General-Stabes, welcher mir am 16ten, so wie am 18ten nie von der Seite gewichen, und durch Rath und That von dem grössten Nutzen gewesen. Eur. Königl-Hoheit können die verdienstvollen Talente dieses Officiers, und ich würde mit meiner schweren Wunde nicht im Stande sein, das Ober-Commando der Hannöversischen Truppen zu behalten, wenn die Contusion des Oberst von Berger ihn nicht erlaubte, die Hauptgeschäfte davon zu führen.

Dem Major Heise von der Konigl-Deutsch. Legion, den Eur. Königl-Hoheit mir als Militär Secretair zugetheilt haben musz ich das verdiente Lob beilegen, dasz er an diesen beiden Tagen einen Eifer und eine Thätigkeit gezeigt hat, die ihm zur grössten Ehre gereichen.

Die Majors Kunze und v. Schlütter, welche keinen angewiesenen Wirkungskreis hatten, da ich nur das Commando der Division führte, haben dem ohngeachtet jede Gelegenheit wahrgenommen mir Beistand zu leisten, weszhalb ich sie in diesem Berichte nicht unbemerkt lassen kann.

Auch der Lieutenant Graf von Kielmansegge ist mir von vielem Nutzen gewesen. Es ist mir für jetzt unmöglich alle die Officiers nachhaft zu machen, die sich in diesen Tagen ausgezeichnet haben, weil mir die Berichte der Brigadiers noch nicht geworden sind. Ich werde solche aber sammeln, und Eur. Königl-Hoheit einen Auszug davon zusenden, damit selbige, womöglich alle zu Höchst dero kenntnisz kommen.

Ebenso sind auch die Listen der Todten, Blessirten und verwundeten noch nicht alle eingegangen, weil sich die Armée gleich wieder in Bewegung gesetzt hat. In wenigen Tagen hoffe ich solche übersenden zu können. Die namentlicher listen der Gebliebenen sollen denn auch binnen kurzem erfolgen.

Noch bemerke ich Eur. Konigl-Hoheit dasz die Blessur welche ich am Ende der Schlacht erhalten, mich nicht hindern wird das Commando der Hannoveraner beizubehalten, wenn Höchst dieselben mir solches unter diesen Umständen ferner vertrauen wollen. In einigen Wochen hoffe ich völlig hergestellt zu sein.

Es sind bis jetzt nur die Officiellen Listen der Todten, Verwundeten und Vermissten von den Hannoverschen Brigaden Graf Kielmansegge und Oberst Halkett, und der Batterie unter Capitain Braun eingelaufen, welche hiermit communicirt werden.

Eerste rapport van Z. K. H. den Prins van Oranje, aan Z. M. den Koning.

Hoofdkwartier te Nivelles, den 17den Junij, 1815,
des ochtends te twee uren.

De Pruisische armée is in hare positie, den vijftienden, des morgens, zeer vroeg geattakeerd geworden, hetwelk ten gevolge heeft gehad, dat zij, dezelve verlatende, van Charleroy over Gosselies, tot in de ommestreken van Fleurus geretireerd is. Zoodra ik van deze attake onderrigt werd, gaf ik orders tot de noodige schikkingen voor het corps d'armée onder mijne bevelen. Het voorgevallene bij de Pruisische armée had, reeds den vijftienden, des avonds ten vijf uren, ten gevolge, dat het bataillon Oranje-Nassau, met eene batterij rijdende artillerie het dorp Frasnes bezettende, aangevallen werd. Deze troepen bleven in bezit hunner positie op de hoogte van het voornoemde dorp, niet verre van den kruisweg, genaamd les Quatre Bras. Ten acht uren nam het schermutselen op dit punt een einde.

Zoodra ik van dezen aanval verwittigd werd, gaf ik order aan de derde divisie, zoo als ook aan de kavallerie en aan twee

Engelsche divisien, om naar Nevilles te marcheren, en aan de tweede divisie, om de positie van les Quatre Bras te soutineren. Er kon maar een gedeelte van de tweede divisie zich dadelijk derwaarts begeven, daar de brigade, onder de orders van den generaal-majoor van Byland, niet eerder van Nivelles konde marcheren, dan dat men de aankomst van de andere divisien te Nivelles konde te gemoet zien.

Reeds omtrent vijf uren, gisteren morgen, is het tirailleurvuur op het bovengemelde punt begonnen, en heeft zich tot op den middag, zonder eenig gevolg, van weêrszijden onderhouden. Tegen circa twee uren, werd de aanval, vooral door de kavalierie en de artillerie, veel heviger. De brigade ligte kavallerie, onder bevel van den generaal-majoor van Merle, eerst tegen vier uren kunnende aankomen, had ik, vóór dien tijd, geene kavallerie den vijand tegen te stellen; dan, daar ik inzag van welk groot belang het behoud der positie op de hoogte voor het kruispunt der chaussée, genaamdles Quatre Bras, was, had ik het geluk deze positie te behouden tegen eenen vijand, in alle opzigten en zonder eenig vergelijk, sterker in magt, dewijl ik door de twee corps-d'armée, gekommandeerd door de generaals d'Erlon en Reille, aangevallen ben geworden, en hierin niet hebbende kunnen slagen, heeft de Hertog van Wellington tijd genoeg gehad eene magt bijeen te trekken, om den vijand in deszelfs voornemens te verijdelen. Deze aanval heeft ten gevolge gehad, dat, na een zeer hevig gevecht, hetwelk tot des avonds negen uren geduurd heeft, wij den vijand niet alleen tot staan gebragt, maar zelfs eenigermate terug gedreven hebben. De Pruissische armée, ook gisteren aangevallen, heeft hare hoofdpositie behouden, en het is buiten twijfel, dat Napoleon met eene sterke magt over de geheele linie den aanval bestuurd heeft. Onze troepen zijn in bivouac op het slagveld gebleven, waarheen ik mij dadelijk ga begeven, daar het zeer waarschijnlijk is, dat Napoleon op nieuw zijne voornemens van gisteren zal trachten ten uitvoer te brengen. De Hertog van Wellington heeft alle mogelijke troepen op dit punt doen vereenigen.

Het strekt mij tot het grootste genoegen Uwe Majesteit te kunnen verzekeren, dat Hoogstdeszelfs troepen met veel dapperheid gevochten hebben, de infanterie en artillerie inzonderheid

Door de omstandigheden nog niet in staat zijnde de rapporten van de onderscheidene korpsen, aangaande hun verlies, te ontvangen, is het mij onmogelijk U. M. den staat daarvan bij dezen te kunnen overleggen, hetgeen ik de eer zal hebben zoodra mogelijk te doen.

WILLEM, PRINS van ORANJE.

Tweede rapport van Z. K. H. den Prins van Oranje, aan Z. M. den Koning

Brussel, den 22sten Junij 1815.

Na den slag van den zestienden, waarvan ik de eer heb gehad Uwer Majesteit, den zeventienden, des morgens te twee uren, uit het hoofdkwartier te Nivelles, rapport te doen, heeft de Hertog van Wellington, om in linie met de Pruissische armée te blijven, denzelfden morgen, eene beweging gemaakt, ten gevolge van welke de armée, op de hoogten vóór Waterloo, des avonds te zeven uren, in positie stond, en aldaar den nacht bivouakeerde. De vijandelijke kavallerie de mouvemen ten van de armée volgende, werd meermalen door die der Engelschen met groot verlies terug geslagen.

In den vroegen morgen van den achttienden, outdekte men den vijand tegen ons over, en, omtrent tien uren, namen zijne dispositiën van attake eenen aanvang.

De armée van Buonaparte bestond uit de eerste, tweede, vierde en zesde korpsen, de keizerlijke garde en bijna de geheele kavallerie, en eene artillerie van vele honderd stukken.

Omstreeks elf uren ontdekte de vijand eene batterij van weinige stukken, en onder derzelve vuur naderden zijne tirailleurs onzen regter vleugel; terwijl kort daarop zijne attake zich tegen eene hofstede rigtte, welke aan dezen vleugel links van de chaussée naar Nivelles, omgeven van houtgewas, digt voor onze linie, gelegen was. De vijand heeft de hevigste attake gedaan, om deze hofstede te nemen, doch zijne pogingen waren vruchteloos. Omtrent twaalf uren werd de kanonnade sterk, en, vóór half één was het gevecht algemeen over de geheele linie. De vijand attakeerde onderscheidene malen de beide vleugels; dan, zijn hoofdoogmerk zijnde, om op de regter

zijde van het centrum door te breken, heeft hij alles aangewend om hierin te slagen. De vijandelijke kolommen kavallerie werden met veel onverschrokkenheid aangevoerd; dan, niettegenstaande zij met de hardnekkigste woede, van half vier uren tot aan het einde der bataille, telkens hunne aanvallen herhaalden, konde echter niets onze linie aan het wijken brengen; de vijand werd altoos terug geslagen, zoo door het vuur van de quarré's als door de charges van de kavallerie.

Het is onmogelijk Uwe Majesteit te beschrijven, met welke verbittering, vooral gedurende de laatste zes uren, gevochten is. Ik heb het geluk niet mogen hebben het einde van dezen zoo roemvollen als belangrijken veldslag bij te wonen, hebbende, een half uur vóór de nederlaag van den vijand, een schot door den linker schouder bekomen, waardoor ik genoodzaakt werd het slagveld te verlaten.

Het maakt mij onuitsprekelijk gelukkig, Uwer Majesteit te kunnen melden, dat Hoogstdeszelfs troepen van alle wapenen met veel dapperheid gevochten hebben: bij de charges van de kavallerie heeft zich bijzonder de brigade karabiniers gedistinueerd.

De divisie van den luitenant-generaal Chassé is laat in het vuur gekomen, en alzoo ik mij in persoon van het centrum niet konde verwijderen, had ik hem, voor dien dag, onder de orders van Lord Hill, kommanderende het tweede arméekorps, gesteld, en heb berigt ontvangen, dat deze divisie mede zeer dapper gevochten heeft, en de luitenant-generaal Chassé, benevens de beide kommandanten der brigades, zich zeer goed van hunnen pligt gekweten hebben.

Ik ben nog niet in de mogelijkheid Uwer Majesteit ons geleden verlies op te geven, zijnde de rapporten daarvan inwachtende; het smart mij intusschen te moeten zeggen, dat hetzelfde zeer sterk is. De generaals der divisien zijn gelast mij rapport te doen der genen welke zich bijzonder hebben gedistinueerd, en ik moet mij bepalen bij Uwer Majesteit op te noemen, die, welke zulks onder mijn oog gadaan hebben, namelijk:

De luitnants-generaal Collaert en de Perponcher; de eerstgenoemde is gewond.

De generaal-majoor Van Merle, een kundig en braaf officier,

is op het slagveld aan zijne wonden overleden. Ik neme deze gelegenheid waar, zijne nagelatene weduwe en kinderen in de gunst van Uwer Majesteit aan te bevelen.

De generaal-majoor Trip heeft zich bijzonder gedistingueerd, zoo door zijne kunde als dapperheid.

De generaal-majoor Ghigny.

De kommandanten der drie regimenten karabiniers, als: de luitenant-kolonel Coenegracht, aan zijne wonden overleden; de kolonel de Bruin en de luitenant-kolonel Lechleitner, gewond.

De luitenant-kolonel Westenberg, van het bataillon landmilitie No. 5, is een zeer goed officier, en heeft zijn bataillon, dat zich zeer braaf en dapper in den slag van den zestienden gedragen heeft, met zeer veel beleid aangevoerd.

De majoor Hegman, van het derde bataillon Nassau, gewond.

De majoors Mercx en Bryas, van het regiment karabiniers No. 2, de laatste gewond.

De majoor van de artillerie de la Sarraz.

De kwartiermeester-generaal, de generaal-majoor de Constant Rebecque, heeft rich zeer wèl van zijnen pligt gekweten, en is mij van grooten dienst geweest.

Ik achte mij eindelijk nog verplicht, Uwer Majesteit mijne tevredenheid te betuigen over het gedrag van alle mijne adjudanten. De majoor van Limburg Stirum is, reeds in den slag van den zestienden, gewond geworden, en, op den achttienden zijn den kolonel du Caylar één, den luitenant-kolonel de Cruquenbourg twee, en den majoor Ampt één paard onder het lijf dood geschoten.

Mijn' adjudant, den majoor van Hooff, heb ik opgedragen dit rapport over te brengen, nemende de vrijheid denzelven in Uwer Majesteits gunst aan te bevelen.

WILLEM, PRINSE van ORANJE.

Le Moniteur Universel, Supplement Extraordinaire, au Numero du 21 Juin, 1815.—Nouvelle de l'Armée—Bataille de Ligny-sous-Fleurus.

Le 16, au matin, l'armée occupait les positions suivantes:—

L'aile gauche, commandée par le Maréchal duc d'Elchingen, et composée du 1^{er} et du 2^e corps d'infanterie et du 2^e de cavalerie, occupait la position de Fresne.

L'aile droite, commandée par le Maréchal Grouchy, et composée du 3^e et 4^e corps d'infanterie et du 5^e corps de cavalerie, occupait les hauteurs derriere Fleurus.

Le quartier-général de l'Empereur était à Charleroi, où se trouvait la garde impériale et le 6^e corps.

L'aile gauche eut l'ordre de marcher sur les Quatre-Bras, et la droite sur Sombref. L'Empereur se parta à Fleurus avec sa réserve.

Les colonnes du Maréchal Grouchy étant en marche, appercurent après avoir dépassé Fleurus, l'armée ennemie, commandée par le Feld-Maréchal Blücher, occupant les plateaux du Moulin de Bussy, par la gauche, le village de Sombre, et prolongeant sa cavalerie fort avant sur la route de Namur; sa droite était à St. Amand, et occupait ce gros village avec de grande forces, ayant devant elle un ravin qui formait sa position.

L'Empereur fut reconnoître la force et les positions de l'ennemi, et resolut d'attaquer sur-le-champ. Il fallut faire un changement de front, la droite en avant et en pivotant sur Fleurus.

Le Général Vandamme marcha sur St. Amand, le Général Gérard sur Ligny, et le Maréchal Grouchy sur Sombref. La 4^e division du 2^e corps, commandée par le Général Girard, marcha en réserve derriere le corps du Général Vandamme. La garde se rangea à la hauteur de Fleurus, ainsi que les cuirassiers du Général Milhand.

A trois heures après-midi, ces dispositions furent achevées. La division du Général Lesol, faisant partie du corps du Général Vandamme, s'engagea la première et s'empara de St.

Amand, d'où elle chassa l'ennemi à la bayonnette. Elle se maintint pendant tout le combat au cimetière et au clocher de St. Amand ; mais ce village, qui est très étendu fut le théâtre de différents combats pendant la soirée ; tout le corps du Général Vandamme y fut engagé, et l'ennemi y engagea des forces considérables.

Le Général Girard, placé en réserve du corps du Général Vandamme, tourna le village par sa droite, et s'y battit avec sa valeur accoutumée. Les forces respectives étaient soutenues de part et d'autre par une soixantaine de bouches à feu.

A la droite le Général Gérard s'engagea avec le 4^e corps au village de Ligny, qui fut pris et repris plusieurs fois.

Le Maréchal Grouchy, à l'extrême droite, et le Général Pajol combattirent au village de Sombref. L'ennemi montra de 80 à 90 mille hommes et un grand nombre de pièces de canon.

A sept heures, nous étions maîtres de tous les villages situés sur le bord du ravin qui couvrait la position de l'ennemi, mais il occupait encore avec toutes ses masses le plateau du Moulin de Bussy.

L'Empereur se parta avec sa garde au village de Ligny. Le Général Gérard fit déboucher le Général Pecheur avec ce qui lui restait de réserve, presque toutes les troupes ayant été engagées dans ce village. Huit bataillons de la garde débouchèrent à la bayonnette, et derrière eux les quatre escadrons de service, les cuirassiers du Général Delort, ceux du Général Milhaud, et les grenadiers à cheval de la garde. La vieille garde aborda à la bayonnette les colonnes ennemies qui étaient sur les hauteurs de Bussy, et en un instant couvrit le champ de bataille de morts. L'escadron de service attaqua et rompit un carré, et les cuirassiers poussèrent l'ennemi dans toutes les directions. A sept heures et demie nous avions 40 pièces de canon, beaucoup de voitures, des drapeaux et des prisonniers, et l'ennemi cherchait son salut dans une retraite précipitée. A dix heures, la bataille était finie, et nous nous trouvions maîtres de tout le champ de bataille.

Le Général Lutzow, partisan, a été fait prisonnier. Les prisonniers assurent que le Feld-Maréchal Blücher a été blessé.

L'élite de l'armée Prussienne a été détruite dans cette bataille. Sa perte ne peut être moindre de 15,000 hommes. La nôtre est de 3000 hommes tués ou blessés.

A la gauche le Maréchal Ney avait marché sur les Quatre-Bras, avec une division qui avait culbuté une division Anglaise qui s'y trouvait placée. Mais attaqué par le Prince d'Orange avec vingt-cinq mille hommes, partie Anglais, partie Hanovriens, à la solde de l'Angleterre, il se replia sur sa position de Frasnes. Là s'engagèrent des combats multipliés ; l'ennemi s'attachait à la forcer, mais il le fit vainement. Le Duc Elchingen attendait le premier corps qui n'arriva que la nuit, il se borna à garder sa position. Dans un carré attaqué par le 8^e régiment de cuirassiers, le drapeau du 69^e régiment d'infanterie Anglais est tombé entre nos mains. Le Prince de Brunswick a été tué. Le Prince d'Orange a été blessé. On assure que l'ennemi a eu beaucoup de personnages et de généraux de marque tués ou blessés, on porte la perte des Anglais à 4 ou 5000 hommes ; la nôtre de ce côté a été très considérable, elle s'élève à 4200 hommes tués ou blessés. Ce combat a fini à la nuit. Lord Wellington a ensuite évacué les Quatre-Bras, et s'est porté sur Genappe.

Dans la matinée du 17, l'Empereur s'est rendu aux Quatre-Bras, d'où il a marché pour attaquer l'armée Anglaise ; il l'a poussée jusqu'à l'entrée de la forêt de Soignes avec l'aile gauche et la réserve. L'aile droite s'est portée par Sombref à la suite du Feld-Maréchal Blücher, qui se dirigeait sur Wavres, où il paraissait vouloir se placer.

A dix heures du soir, l'armée Anglaise occupa Mont-Saint-Jean par son centre, se trouva en position en avant de la forêt de Soignes ; il aurait fallu pouvoir disposer de trois heures pour l'attaquer ; on fut donc obligé de remettre au lendemain.

Le Quartier Général de l'Empereur fut établi à la ferme de Caillou près Planchenoit. La pluie tombait par torrens. Ainsi, dans la journée du 16, la gauche, la droite et la réserve ont été également engagées à une distance d'a-peu-près deux lieues.

Bataille de Mont-Saint-Jean.

A neuf heures du matin, la pluie ayant un peu diminuée, le 1^{er} corps se mit en mouvement, et se plaça, la gauche à la route

de Bruxelles, et vis-à-vis le village de Mont-Saint-Jean, qui paraissait le centre de la position de l'ennemi. Le second corps appuya sa droite à la route de Bruxelles, et sa gauche à un petit bois à portée de canon de l'armée Anglaise. Les cuirassiers se portèrent en reserve derrière, et la garde en réserve sur les hauteurs. Le 6^e corps avec la cavalerie du Général d'Aumont, sous les ordres du Comte Lobau, fut destinée à se porter en arrière de notre droite, pour s'opposer à un corps Prussien qui paraissait avoir échappé au Maréchal Grouchy, et être dans l'intention de tomber sur notre flanc droit ; intention qui nous avait été connue par nos rapports, et par une lettre d'un général Prussien, que portait une ordonnance prise par nos coureurs.

Les troupes étaient pleines d'ardeur. On estimait les forces de l'armée Anglaise à 80 mille hommes ; on supposait qu'un corps Prussien, qui pouvait être en mesure vers le soir, pouvait être de 15 mille hommes. Les forces ennemies étaient donc de plus de 90 mille hommes. Les nôtres moins nombreuses.

A midi tous les préparatifs étant terminés, le Prince Jérôme, commandant une division du 2^e corps, et destinée à en former l'extreme gauche, se porta sur le bois dont l'ennemi occupait une partie. La canonnade s'engagea ; l'ennemi soutint par 30 pièces de canon les troupes qu'il avait envoyées pour garder le bois ; nous fîmes aussi de notre côté des dispositions d'artillerie. A une heure, le Prince Jérôme fut maître de tout le bois, et toute l'armée l'Anglaise se replia derrière un rideau ; le Comte d'Erlon attaqua alors le village de Mont-Saint-Jean, et fit appuyer son attaque par 80 pièces de canon. Il s'engagea la une epouvantable canonnade qui dut beaucoup faire souffrir l'armée Anglaise. Tous les coups portaient sur le plateau. Une brigade de la premiere division du Comte d'Erlon s'empara du village de Mont-Saint-Jean ; une seconde brigade fut chargée par un corps de cavalerie Anglaise, qui lui fit éprouver beaucoup de pertes. Au même moment, une division de cavalerie Anglaise chargea la batterie du Comte d'Erlon par sa droite, et désorganisa plusieurs pièces ; mais les cuirassiers du Général Milhaud, chargèrent cette division, dont trois regimens furent rompus et echarpés.

Il était trois heures après midi. L'Empereur fit avancer la

garde pour la placer dans la plaine sur le terrain qu'avait occupait le premier corps au commencement de l'action. Ce corps se trouvant déjà en avant. La division Prussienne, dont on avait prévu le mouvement, s'engagea alors avec les tirailleurs du Comte Lobau, en prolongeant son feu sur tout notre flanc droit. Il était convenable, avant de rien entreprendre ailleurs, d'attendre l'issue qu'aurait cette attaque. A cet effet, tous les moyens de la réserve étaient prêts à se porter au secours du Comte Lobau et à écraser le corps Prussien, lorsqu'il se serait avancé.

Cela fait, l'Empereur avait le projet de mener une attaque par le village de Mont-Saint-Jean dont on espérait un succès décisif ; mais par un mouvement d'impatience, si fréquent dans nos annales militaires et qui nous a été souvent si funeste, la cavalerie de réserve s'étant aperçus d'un mouvement rétrograde que faisaient les Anglais pour se mettre à l'abri de nos batteries, dont ils avaient déjà tant souffert, couronna les hauteurs de Mont-Saint-Jean et chargea l'infanterie. Ce mouvement qui, fait à tems et soutenu par les réserves, devait décider de la journée, fait isolément et avant que les affaires de la droite ne fussent terminées, devint funeste.

N'y ayant aucun moyen de la contremander, l'ennemi montrant beaucoup de masses d'infanterie et de cavalerie, et ses deux divisions de cuirassiers étant engagées, toute notre cavalerie courut au même moment pour soutenir ses camarades. La, pendant trois heures, se firent de nombreuses charges qui nous valurent l'enfoncement de plusieurs carrés et six drapeaux de l'infanterie Anglaise, avantage hors de proportion avec les pertes qu'éprouvait notre cavalerie par la mitraille et les fusillades. Il était impossible de disposer de nos réserves d'infanterie jusqu'à ce qu'on eût repoussé l'attaque de flanc du corps Prussien. Cette attaque se prolongeait toujours et perpendiculairement sur notre flanc droit, l'Empereur y envoya le Général Duhesme avec la jeune garde et plusieurs batteries de réserve. L'ennemi fut contenu, fut repoussé et recula ; il avait épuisé ses forces, et l'on n'en avait plus rien à craindre. C'est ce moment, qui était celui indiqué pour une attaque sur le centre de l'ennemi. Comme les cuirassiers souffraient par la mitraille, on envoya quatre bataillons de la moyenne garde pour protéger les cuirassiers, soutenir la position, et si cela

était possible, dégager et faire reculer dans la plaine une partie de notre cavalerie.

On envoya deux autres bataillons pour se tenir en potence sur l'extrême gauche de la division, qui avait manœuvré sur nos flancs, afin de n'avoir de ce côté aucune inquiétude, le reste fut disposé en réserve, partie pour occuper la potence en arrière de Mont-St-Jean, partie sur le plateau en arrière du champ de bataille qui formait notre position de retraite.

Dans cet état de choses, la bataille était gagnée, nous occupions toutes les positions que l'ennemi occupait au commencement de l'action, notre cavalerie ayant été trop tôt et mal employée, nous ne pouvions plus espérer de succès décisifs. Mais le Maréchal Grouchy ayant appris le mouvement du corps Prussien, marchait sur le derrière de ce corps, ce qui nous assurait un succès éclatant pour la journée du lendemain. Après huit heures de feu et de charges d'infanterie et de cavalerie, toute l'armée voyait avec satisfaction la bataille gagnée et le champ de bataille en notre pouvoir.

Sur les huit heures et demie, les quatre bataillons de la moyenne garde qui avaient été envoyés sur le plateau au-delà de Mont-Saint-Jean pour soutenir les cuirassiers, étant gênés par la mitraille, marchèrent à la bayonnette pour enlever ses batteries. Le jour finissait, une charge faite sur leur flanc par plusieurs escadrons Anglais les mirent en désordre, les fuyards repassèrent le ravin, les regimens voisins qui virent quelques troupes appartenant à la garde à la débandade, crurent que c'était de la vieille garde et s'ébranlèrent : les cris, Tout est perdu, la garde est repoussée, se firent entendre ; les soldats prétendent même que sur plusieurs points des malveillans apostés ont crié, *Sauve qui peut*. Quoiqu'il en soit, une terreur panique se repandit tout à-la-fois sur tout le champ de bataille ; on se précipita dans le plus grand désordre sur la ligne de communication, les soldats, les canonniers, les caissons se pressaient pour y arriver, la vieille garde, qui était en réserve, en fut assaillie, et fut elle-même entraînée.

Dans un instant, l'armée ne fut plus qu'une masse confuse, toutes les armes étaient mêlées, et il était impossible de reformer un corps. L'ennemi, qui s'aperçut de cette étonnante confusion, fit déboucher des colonnes de cavalerie, le désordre

augmenta, la confusion de la nuit empêcha de rallier les troupes et de leur montrer leur erreur.

Ainsi une bataille terminée, une journée de fausses mesures réparée, de plus grands succès assuré pour le lendemain, tout fut perdu par un moment de terreur panique. Les escadrons même de service, rangés à côté d l'Empereur, furent culbutés et désorganisés par ces flots tumultueux, et il n'y eut plus d'autre chose à faire que de suivre le torrent. Les parcs de réserve, les bagages qui n'avaient point repassé la Sambre, et tout ce qui était sur le champ de bataille sont resté au pouvoir de l'ennemi. Il n'y a eu même aucun moyen d'attendre les troupes de notre droite; on sait ce que c'est que la plus brave armée du monde lorsqu'elle est mêlée et que son organisation n'existe plus.

L'Empereur a passé la Sambre à Charleroi le 19 à cinq heures du matin, Philipville et Avesne ont été donnés pour point de réunion. Le Prince Jérôme, le Général Morand et les autres généraux y ont déjà rallié une partie de l'armée. Le Maréchal Grouchy, avec le corps de la droite, opère son mouvement sur la basse Sambre.

La perte de l'ennemi doit avoir été très grande, à en juger par les drapeaux que nous lui avons pris, et par les pas rétrogrades qu'il avait fait. La notre ne pourra se calculer qu'après le ralliement des troupes. Avant que le désordre éclatât, nous avions déjà éprouvé des pertes considérables, surtout dans notre cavalerie, si funestement et pourtant si bravement engagée. Malgré ces pertes, cette valeureuse cavalerie a constamment gardé la position qu'elle avait prise aux Anglais, et ne l'a abandonnée que quand le tumulte et le désordre du champ de bataille l'y ont forcés. Au milieu de la nuit et des obstacles qui encombraient la route, elle n'a pût elle-même conserver son organisation.

L'artillerie, comme à son ordinaire, s'est couvert de gloire. Les voitures du quartier-général étaient restées dans leur position ordinaire, aucun mouvement rétrograde n'ayant été jugé nécessaire. Dans le cours de la nuit, elles sont tombées entre les mains de l'ennemi.

Telle a été l'issue de la bataille de Mont-Saint-Jean, glorieuse pour les armées Françaises et pourtant si funeste.

Du Journal de l'Empire de Jeudi le 29 Juin, 1815.—Lettre de M. le Maréchal Prince de la Moskowa, à S. Exc. M. le Duc d'Otrante.

MONSIEUR LE DUC,—Les bruits les plus diffamans et les plus mensongers se répandent, depuis quelques jours, dans le public, sur la conduite que j'ai tenu dans cette courte et malheureuse campagne; les journaux répètent et semblent accréditer la plus odieuse calomnie. Après avoir combattu 25 ans, et versé mon sang pour la gloire et l'indépendance de ma patrie, c'est moi que l'on ose accuser de la trahison, c'est moi que l'on signale au peuple, à l'armée même, comme l'auteur du désastre qu'elle vient d'essuyer!

Forcé de rompre le silence, car s'il est toujours pénible de parler de soi, c'est surtout lorsque l'on a à repousser la calomnie, je m'adresse à vous, monsieur le duc, comme président du gouvernement provisoire, pour vous tracer un exposé fidèle de ce dont j'ai été témoin.

Le 11 Juin, je reçu l'ordre du ministre de la guerre de me rendre au quartier impérial; je n'avais aucun commandement, ni aucunes données sur la composition et la force de l'armée, l'Empereur ni le ministre ne m'avaient jamais rien dit précédemment qui pût même me faire pressentir que je dusse être employé dans cette campagne; j'étais conséquemment pris au dépourvu, sans chevaux, sans équipages, sans argent, et je fus obligé d'en emprunter pour me rendre à ma destination. Arriver le 12 à Laon, le 13 à Avesnes, et le 14 à Beaumont, j'achetai dans cette dernière ville, de Monsieur le Maréchal Duc de Trévise, deux chevaux, avec lesquels je me rendis, le 15, à Charleroi, accompagné de mon premier aide-de-camp, le seul officier que j'eusse auprès de moi; j'arrivai au moment où l'ennemi, attaqué par nos troupes légères, se repliait sur Fleurus et Gosselies.

L'Empereur m'ordonna aussitôt d'aller me mettre à la tête des 1^{er} et 2^e corps d'infanterie, commandés par les Lieutenans-Généraux d'Erlon et Reille, de la division de cavalerie légère du Lieutenant-Général Piré, d'une division de cavalerie légère de la garde sur les ordres des Lieutenans-Généraux Lefebvre-

Desnouettes et Colbert, et de deux divisions de cavalerie du Comte de Valmy, ce qui formait huit divisions d'infanterie et quatre de cavalerie. Avec ces troupes, dont cependant je n'avais encore qu'une partie sous la main, je poussais l'ennemi et l'obligeai d'évacuer Gosselies, Frasnes, Mellet, et Heppignies; là, elles prirent position le soir, à l'exception du 1^{er} corps qui était encore à Marchiennes, et qui ne me rejoignit que le lendemain.

Le 16, je reçû l'ordre d'attaquer les Anglais dans leur position des Quatre-Bras; nous marchâmes à l'ennemi avec un enthousiasme difficile à dépeindre; rien ne résistait à notre impétuosité: la bataille devenait générale, et la victoire n'était pas douteuse, lorsque au moment où j'allais faire avancer le premier corps d'infanterie, qui jusque là avait été laissé par moi en réserve à Frasnes, j'appris que l'Empereur en avait disposé, sans m'en prévenir, ainsi que la division Girard du 2^e corps pour les diriger sur Saint-Amand, et appuyer son aile gauche qui était fortement engagée contre les Prussiens; le coup que me porta cette nouvelle fut terrible; n'ayant plus sous mes ordres que trois divisions, au lieu de huit sur lesquelles je comptais, je fus obligé de laisser échapper la victoire, et malgré tous mes efforts, malgré la bravoure et le dévouement de mes troupes, je ne pus parvenir dès lorsqu'à me maintenir dans ma position jusqu'à la fin de la journée. Vers neuf heures du soir, le 1^{er} corps me fut renvoyé par l'Empereur, auquel il n'avait été d'aucune utilité: ainsi vingt-cinq à trente mille hommes ont été, pour ainsi dire, paralysés, et se sont proménés pendant toute la bataille, l'arme au bras, de la gauche à la droite, sans tirer un seul coup de fusil.

Il m'est impossible de ne pas suspendre un instant ces détails, pour vous faire remarquer, monsieur le duc, toutes les conséquences de ce faux mouvement, et en général les mauvaises dispositions prises pendant cette journée.

Par quelle fatalité, par exemple, l'Empereur, au lieu de porter toutes ces forces contre Lord Wellington, qui aurait été attaqué à l'improviste et ne se trouvait point en mesure, a-t-il regardé cette attaque comme secondaire? Comment l'Empereur, après le passage de la Sambre, a-t-il pu concevoir la possibilité de donner deux batailles le même jour? C'est cependant ce qui

vient de se passer contre des forces doubles des nôtres, et c'est ce que les militaires qui l'ont vu ont encore peine à comprendre.

Au lieu de cela, s'il avait laissé un corps d'observation pour contenir les Prussiens, et marché avec ses plus fortes masses, pour m'appuyer, l'armée Anglaise était indubitablement détruite entre les Quatre-Bras et Genappes, et cette position qui séparait les deux armées alliées, une fois en notre pouvoir, donnait à l'Empereur la facilité de déborder la droite des Prussiens, et de les écraser à leur tour. L'opinion général, en France, et surtout dans l'armée, était que l'Empereur ne voulait s'attacher qu'à détruire d'abord l'armée Anglaise, et les circonstances étaient bien favorable pour cela; mais les destins ont ordonné autrement.

Le 17, l'armée marchait dans la direction de Mont-Saint-Jean.

Le 18, la bataille commença vers une heure, et quoique le bulletin qui en donne le récit ne fasse aucune mention de moi, je n'ai pas besoin d'affirmer que j'y étais présent.

M. le Lieutenant-Général Comte Drouot a déjà parlé de cette bataille, dans la chambre des Pairs; sa narration est exacte, à l'exception toutefois de quelques faits importants qu'il a tus ou qu'il a ignorés, et que je dois faire connaître. Vers sept heures du soir, après le plus affreux carnage que j'ai jamais vus, le Général la Bedoyère vint me dire de la part de l'Empereur, que M. le Maréchal Grouchy arrivait à notre droite et attaquait la gauche des Anglais et Prussiens réunis; cet officier général, en parcourant la ligne, repandit cette nouvelle parmi les soldats, dont le courage et le dévouement étaient toujours les mêmes, et qui en donnèrent de nouvelles preuves en ce moment, malgré la fatigue dont ils étaient exténués; cependant, quel fut mon étonnement, je dois dire mon indignation, quand j'appris quelques instans après, que non-seulement M. le Maréchal Grouchy n'était point arrivé à notre appui, comme on venait d'assurer à toute l'armée, mais que quarante à cinquante mille Prussiens attaquaient notre extrême droite, et la forçaient de se replier! Soit que l'Empereur se fût trompé sur le moment où M. le Maréchal Grouchy pouvait le soutenir, soit que la marche de ce maréchal eût été plus retardée qu'on l'avait présumé par les efforts de l'ennemi, le fait est qu'au moment où

l'on nous annonçait son arrivée, il n'était encore que vers Wavres sur la Dyle : c'était pour nous, comme s'il se fût trouvé à cent lieues de notre champ de bataille.

Peu de tems après, je vis arriver quatre régimens de la moyenne garde, conduits par l'Empereur en personne, qui voulait, avec ces troupes, renouveler l'attaque et enfoncer le centre de l'ennemi ; il m'ordonna de marcher à leur tête avec le Général Friant : généraux, officiers, soldats, tous montrèrent la plus grande intrépidité, mais ce corps de troupes était trop faible pour pouvoir résister long-tems aux forces que l'ennemi lui opposait, et il fallut bientôt renoncer à l'espoir que cette attaque avait donné pendant quelques instans. Le Général Friant a été frappé d'une balle à côté de moi ; moi-même, j'ai eu mon cheval tué, et j'ai été renversé sous lui. Les braves qui reviendront de cette terrible affaire me rendront, j'espère, la justice de dire qu'ils m'ont vu à pied, l'épée à la main, pendant toute la soirée, et que je n'ai quitté cette scène de carnage, que l'un des derniers, et au moment où la retraite a été forcée.

Pendant les Prussiens continuaient leur mouvement offensif, et notre droite pliait sensiblement ; les Anglais marchèrent, à leur tour, en avant. Il nous restait encore quatre carrés de la vieille garde, placés avantageusement pour protéger la retraite ; ces braves grenadiers, l'élite de l'armée, forcés de se replier successivement, n'ont cédé le terrain que pied à pied, jusqu'à ce qu'enfin accablés par le nombre, ils ont été presque entièrement détruits. Dès lors le mouvement rétrograde fut prononcé, et l'armée ne forma plus qu'une colonne confuse ; il n'y a cependant jamais eu de déroute, ni de cri *Sauve qui peut*, ainsi qu'on en a osé calomnier l'armée dans le bulletin. Pour moi, constamment à l'arrière-garde que je suivis à pieds, ayant eu tous mes chevaux tués, exténué de fatigue, couvert de contusions, et ne me sentant plus la force de marcher, je dois la vie à un caporal de la garde qui me soutint dans ma marche, et ne m'abandonna point pendant cette retraite. Vers onze heures du soir, je trouvai le Lieutenant-Général Lefebvre-Desnouettes, et l'un de ses officiers, le Major Schmidt, eu la générosité de me donner le seul cheval qui lui restât. C'est ainsi que j'arrivai à Marchienne-au-Pont, à quatre heure du matin, seul, sans officiers, ignorant ce qu'était devenu l'Empereur que, quelque tems avant la fin

de la bataille, j'avais entièrement perdu de vue, et que je pouvais croire pris ou tué. Le Général Pamphile Lecroix, chef de l'état-major du deuxième corps, que je trouvai dans cette ville, m'ayant dit que l'Empereur était à Charleroi, je dus supposer que sa Majesté allait se mettre à la tête du corps de Monsieur le Maréchal Grouchy, pour couvrir la Sambre, et faciliter aux troupes les moyens de se rallier, vers Avesnes, et dans cette persuasion, je me rendis à Beaumont; mais des parties de cavalerie nous suivant de très-près, et ayant déjà intercepté les routes de Maubeuge et de Philippeville, je reconnus qu'il était de toute impossibilité d'arrêter un seul soldat sur ce point, et de s'opposer au progrès d'un ennemi victorieux. Je continuai ma marche sur Avesnes, où je ne pus obtenir aucun renseignemens sur ce qu'était devenu l'Empereur.

Dans cet état de choses, n'ayant de nouvelles ni de sa Majesté, ni du major-général, le désordre croissant à chaque instant, et à l'exception des débris de quelques régimens de la garde et de la ligne, chacun s'en allant de son côté, je pris la détermination de me rendre sur-le-champ à Paris, par Saint-Quentin, pour faire connaître le plus promptement possible au ministre de la guerre la véritable situation des affaires, afin qu'il pût au moins envoyer au-devant de l'armée quelques troupes nouvelles, et prendre rapidement les mesures que nécessitaient les circonstances. A mon arrivée au Bourget, à trois lieues de Paris, j'appris que l'Empereur y avait passé le matin, à neuf heures.

Voilà, monsieur le duc, le récit exact de cette funeste campagne.

Maintenant je demande à ceux qui ont survécu à cette belle et nombreuse armée, de quelle manière pourrait-on m'accuser du désastre dont elle vient d'être victime, et dont nos fastes militaires n'offrent point d'exemple? J'ai, dit-on, trahi la patrie, moi qui, pour la servir, ai toujours montré un zèle que peut-être j'ai poussé trop loin, et qui a pu m'égarer; mais cette calomnie n'est et ne peut être appuyée d'aucun fait, d'aucune circonstance, d'aucune présomption. D'où peuvent cependant provenir ces bruits odieux qui se sont répandus tout-à-coup avec une effrayante rapidité? Si, dans les recherches que je pourrais faire à cet égard, je ne craignais presque autant de découvrir que d'ignorer la vérité, je dirais que tout me porte à

croire que j'ai été indignement trompé, et qu'on cherche à envelopper du voile de la trahison les fautes et les extravagances de cette campagne : fautes qu'on s'est bien gardé d'avouer dans les bulletins qui ont paru, et contre lesquelles je me suis inutilement élevé avec cet accent de la vérité que je viens encore de faire entendre dans la chambre des Pairs.

J'attends de la justice de votre Exc., et de son obligeance pour moi, qu'elle voudra bien faire insérer cette lettre dans les journaux, et lui donner la plus grande publicité.

Je renouvelle à V. Exc., &c.,

Le Maréchal Prince de la Moskowa,

(Signé) NEY.

Paris, le 26 Juin, 1815.

Du Moniteur Universel de Samedi, le 24 Juin, 1815.

Rapport à l'Empereur.

Dinant, le 20 Juin, 1815.

SIRE—Ce n'est que sept heures du soir, le 18 Juin, que j'ai reçu la lettre du Duc de Dalmatie, que me prescrivait de marcher sur Saint-Lambert, et d'attaquer le Général Bulow. J'avais rencontré l'ennemi en me portant sur Wavres, à hauteur de la baraque. Sur le champ il avait été abordé, poussé jusque dans Wavres, et le corps Vandamme attaquait cette ville et était fortement engagé. La portion de Wavres sur la route de la Dyle, était emportée, mais on éprouvait de grandes difficultés à déboucher de l'autre côté. Le Général Gérard essayait d'enlever le moulin de Bielge, et d'y passer la rivière ; il ne pouvait y réussir ; il y avait été blessé d'une balle dans la poitrine, blessure qui heureusement n'est pas mortelle. Le Lieutenant-général Alix avait été tué à l'attaque de Wavres ; dans cet état de chose, impatient de déboucher sur le Mont Saint-Lambert, et co-operer aux succès des armes de V. M., dans cette journée si importante, je dirigeait sur Limale la cavalerie de Payol, la division Teste, et deux des divisions du Général Gérard, afin de forcer le passage de la Dyle, et de marcher contre le Général Bulow. Le corps du Général Vandamme entretenait l'attaque de Wavres et du moulin de Bielge, d'où l'ennemi faisait mine de vouloir déboucher ; ce que je

jugeai qu'il ne pouvait effectuer, la position et le courage de nos troupes répondant qu'il n'y parviendrait pas. Mon mouvement sur Limale prit du temps, à raison de la distance; cependant j'arrivai, j'effectuai le passage, et les hauteurs furent enlevées par la division Vichery et la cavalerie. La nuit ne permit pas d'aller loin, et je n'entendait plus de canon du côté où V. M. se battait.

Dans cette position j'attendis le jour; Wavres et Bielge étaient occupés par les Prussiens. Le 19 à trois heures du matin ils attaquèrent à leur tour, voulant profiter de la mauvaise position où j'étais, et prétendant me rejeter dans le défilé, enlever l'artillerie qui avait déboucher et me faire repasser la Dyle. Leurs efforts furent inutiles; l'intrépidité des troupes mit à même de repousser toutes les attaques, de culbuter les Prussiens, et de faire enlever par la division Teste le village de Bielge; le brave Général Penne y fut tué.

Le Général Vandamme faisant alors passer par Bielge une de ses divisions, enleva sans peine les hauteurs de Wavres, et sur toute ma ligne le succès fut complet. J'étais en avant de Rosierne, me disposant à marcher sur Bruxelles, lorsque j'ai reçu la douloureuse nouvelle de la perte de la bataille de Waterloo. L'officier qui me l'apporta me dit que V. M. se retirait sur la Sambre, sans pouvoir préciser sur quel point il entraînait dans ses vues que je me dirigeasse. Engagé sur toute ma ligne, je cessai de poursuivre, et préparai mon mouvement rétrograde. L'ennemi en retraite ne songea pas à me suivre. Je marchai jusqu'à Temploux à Gembloux; ayant ma cavalerie légère à Mari de Saint Denis et mes dragons sur Namur. Apprenant que l'ennemi avait déjà passé la Sambre et se trouvait sur mon flanc, n'étant pas assez fort pour opérer une diversion utile pour l'armée de V. M. sans compromettre celle que je commandais, je marchai sur Namur; le 4^e corps par la route de Namur à Charleroi, et la 3^e par celle directe qui y conduisit de Temploux. Dans ce moment les queues des deux colonnes furent attaquées, celle de droite ayant fait son mouvement rétrograde plus tôt qu'on ne s'y attendait compromit un instant la retraite de celle de gauche. De bonnes dispositions réparèrent tout; deux pièces qui avaient été prises furent reprises par le brave 20^e de dragons, sous les ordres du Colonel

Briqueville, qui enleva en outre un obusier à l'ennemi. Les faibles carrés du regiment, chargés par une cavalerie nombreuse, l'attendirent à bout portant, lui firent essuyer une perte énorme, et prouvèrent ce que peuvent de bonnes dispositions, jointes à une attitude calme et un feu bien dirigé. La cavalerie ennemie, chargée à son tour par le 1^{er} de hussards aux ordres du Maréchal-du-camp Clary, laissa en nos mains nombre de prisonniers. Tout rentra donc sans perte dans Namur. Le long défilé qui règne depuis cette place jusqu'à Dinant, défilé où l'on ne peut marcher que sur une seule colonne, et les embarras résultant des nombreux transports de blessés que je conduisais avec moi, rendaient nécessaires de tenir long tems la ville, où je ne trouvai pas les moyens de faire sauter le pont. Je chargeai de la défense de Namur le Général Vandamme, qui avec son intrépidité ordinaire s'y maintint jusqu'à huit heures du soir, de sorte que rien ne resta en arrière, et que j'occupai Dinant.

L'ennemi a perdu des milliers d'hommes à l'attaque de Namur ; on s'est battu avec un acharnement rare, et les troupes ont fait leur devoir d'une manière bien digne d'éloge.

Je suis, avec respect, Sire, de votre Majesté le très-fidèle sujet,

LE MARÉCHAL COMTE DE GROUCHY.



